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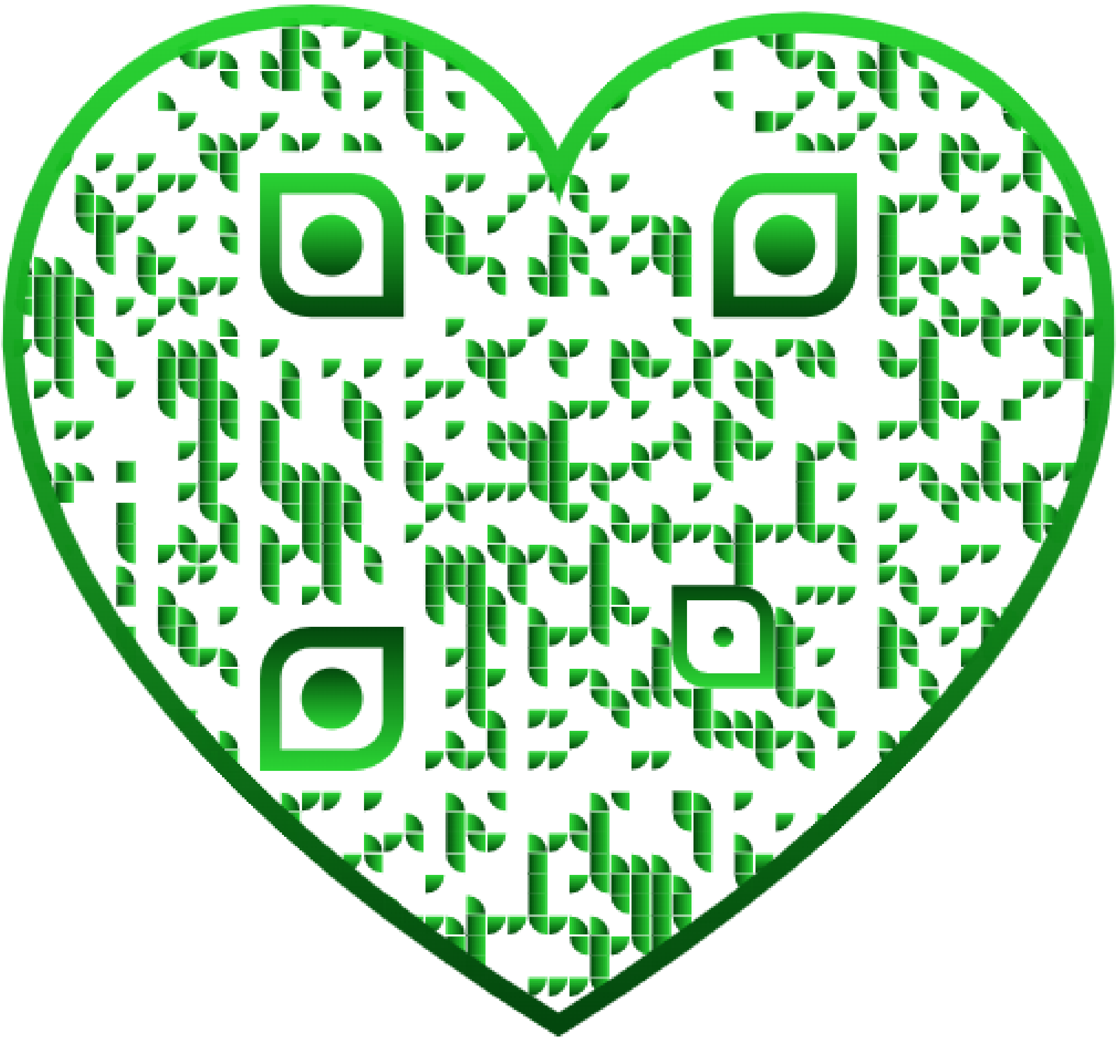

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Welcome

Our February issue always lands in the shops just before the turn of the year, in that little window between Christmas and New Year. For me, it's a good time to pause and reflect, as well as to start planning for what's to come over the next 12 months. If your resolutions include finally starting that dream home build, we have a festive treat for you! The Feb edition comes lovingly wrapped with our guide to the best self build and renovation products, services & suppliers – as selected by our independent Build It Awards judging panel.

In the Best of Self Build & Renovation guide, we share details of all the shortlisted products and companies, plus an in-depth reveal of the deserving winners, including why they impressed the judges. Our goal with the Awards is to introduce you to quality options for your project, help you gain confidence in your specification decisions, and to inspire you to realise a tailor-made home that truly works for you.

The latest news, as we send this magazine to print, is that the government has just released its updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), intended to support delivery of 370,000 homes per year. Our quick-fire research suggests no grand changes in specific self build policy; though, importantly, there's still clear support for owner-commissioned homes.

Labour's grey belt designation (for less-valuable green belt land) has been fleshed out, but NPPF's focus is on how councils should deal with major development on it. So, we're yet to understand how grey belt could herald greater opportunities for one-off houses (large-scale custom build could be key here). There is, however, a clear message that councils must identify sufficient land supply to meet diverse needs, and Labour appears prepared to weigh down heavily on those that don't deliver. The NPPF is expected to be backed up soon with specific reforms to planning procedure.

Chris

CHRIS BATESMITH, CONTENT DIRECTOR

MEET THE TEAM

SANDER TEL is Build It's digital features editor. Alongside putting together inspiring content at www.self-build.co.uk, on page 17 he's looking at seven real-life garage conversions.

ERIKA CHAFFEY is Build It's features writer. This month she's delving into the different design routes for a self build (page 64) and what it costs to retrofit underfloor heating (page 92).

SCARLETT DEAMER is Build It's editorial assistant. With a passion for self build, she's been researching the latest products, materials and news for your bespoke home project (page 9).

NIGEL GRIFFITHS is Build It's sustainability expert, specialising in eco building. On page 80, he's looking at the key areas to consider when building an ultra low-energy home.

JULIAN OWEN is Build It's design doctor and a self build architect with his own practice. You can speak to him at Build It Live for one-to-one project advice, or visit www.self-build.co.uk/julian

KATE SANDHU is a renovation expert, with a deep knowledge of project management. This month she's investigating what you should budget for a bathroom renovation (page 75).

OPINDER LIDDAR is a Build It Award-winning architect and director of Lapd Architects. Discover the pros and cons of open versus broken-plan living with his expert guide on page 85.

MARTIN GAINE is a former council case officer turned independent planning consultant. In this issue he's exploring the planning rules surrounding knock-down and rebuild projects (95).

ALAN TIERNEY is a historic buildings expert and conservation specialist. For advice on your heritage project, speak to him at Build It Live or check out his articles at www.self-build.co.uk/alan

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WHO CAN DESIGN MY SELF BUILD?

Whatever your project goals, electing the right team or individual to translate your vision into a reality is a key ingredient for success. Erika Chaffey explores three routes to creating your dream home

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ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BATHROOM RENOVATION COSTS

Kate Sandhu explains the key factors to consider for this type of project and shares her top tips on how to bring in a high-quality result that's within your budget

COVER IMAGE: STRIKING SELF BUILD BY 3S ARCHITECTS, SHORTLISTED IN THE 2024 BUILD IT AWARDS. PHOTO: ADAM LETCH

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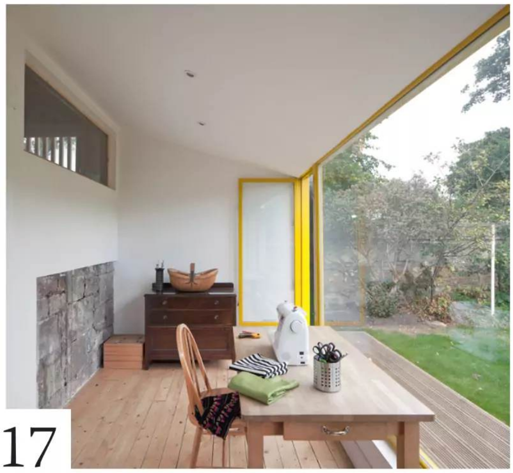

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REAL-LIFE HOMES

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James Cattle from Snell David Architects looks at how to create impactful landscaping

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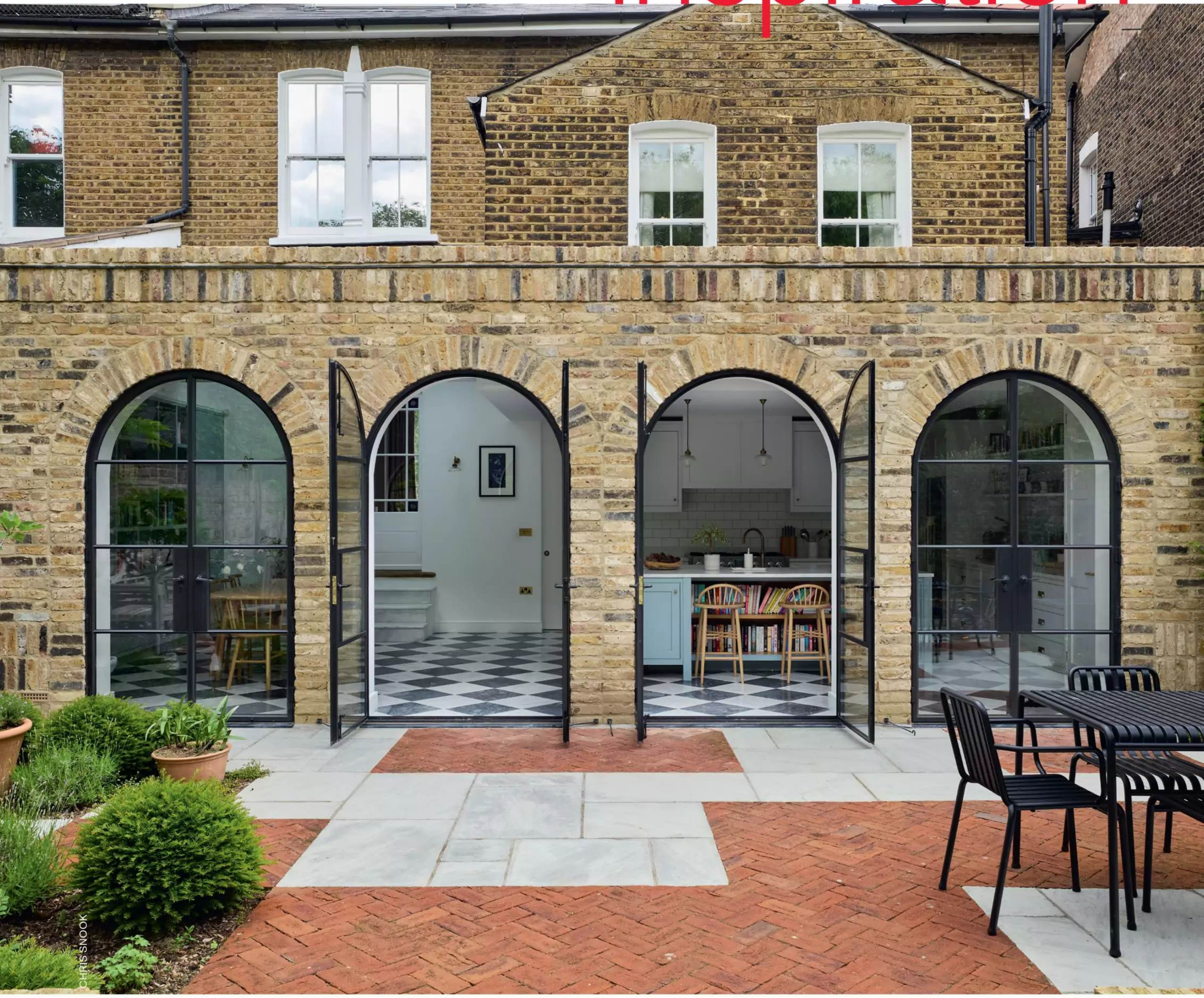
inspiration


CHRIS SNOOK

Playful pavilion-style extension

This semi-detached Victorian property has been carefully restored and extended by Delve Architects. The graceful design opens the South London home up to the rear garden, while keeping the proportions and traditional fabric of the original house intact – a key requirement for its owner.

The pavillion-style extension features a series of brick arches, thoughtfully designed as a homage to the original pergola that once occupied the space. The earthy tones of the brickwork seamlessly integrate with the surrounding architecture, while the sleek slim-line glazing introduces a contemporary touch, perfectly framing the views beyond.

Alongside a sophisticated open plan kitchen, the new addition houses a boot room, plant room/utility and larder. The softly vaulted roof, paired with meticuously positioned rooflights, strategically draws natural light deep into the floorplan, visually expanding the building as one enters.

The timber French doors and stone steps from the lounge have been retained, delineating this space from the brick-clad extension. The flooring has been selected to reflect the personality of each area – preserving the warmth of the original floorboards in the existing structure, contrasting with striking chequerboard marble in the new extension.

Within the original dwelling, the front door, ornate cornicing, skirting, panelling and internal doors have been kept in situ. They have been acid stripped to reveal their true character, a further nod to the history of the site.

To find out more call 020 3488 4408 or visit delvearchitects.com

PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Frame House

by Studio AVC

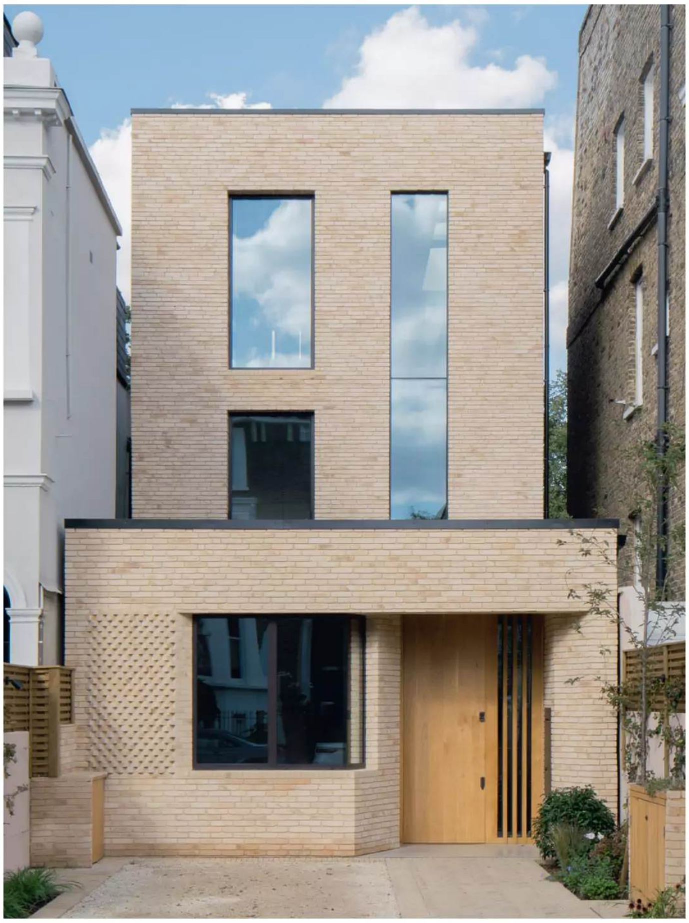
Located within an urban conservation area, this home's design beautifully balances heritage with modernity. Created by Studio AVC, the new build respects its setting yet adds contemporary character and unique form, tailored to the owners' needs.

The exterior subtly draws on features of the nearby Victorian properties, using dog-tooth brickwork to mirror the streetscape's intricate traditional masonry, while the facade's angled geometry echoes the adjoining canted bay windows. Reflective solar control glass projects the surroundings, enabling the home to blend visually with its environment. To the rear, floor-to-ceiling recessed glazing pulls natural light into the property.

Inside, the open-plan kitchen-living area has high ceilings to create an impressive sense of space. Skylights and an open-tread staircase act as a light well, flooding the interior with natural illumination and enhancing the exquisite joinery. Handmade moulded bricks are brought inside to contrast dark metal finishes and partitions, subtly merging old with new to reflect the exterior design.

Sustainability was a central focus to the build. A high-performance structural fabric, efficient new heating setup and a mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) system all minimise energy consumption.

For more information call 020 8540 1101 or visit studioavc.com



Changes to heat pumps under PD

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has put in place changes to the current guidelines for the installation of heat pumps under permitted development (PD). From early 2025, as part of the government's Warm Homes Plan, heat pumps can now be installed within one metre of the property boundary and the size limit for the external unit will increase from 0.6m^3 to 1.5m^3. Noise restrictions are also to be relaxed in a move to promote cleaner forms of heating.

10 years

is the last time the fee for HM Land Registry information services increased. It's now going up by £4 – a symptom of wider price hikes across the plots and planning market. The database allows people to obtain copies of title plans and registers that detail plot boundaries and the name of the owners. Labour have said that the price rise, which came into force in December 2024, is due to the increased costs of running the service, and funding mass digitisation of records.

Lenders reject spray foam insulated homes

Homeowners are struggling to sell or remortgage due to some lenders rejecting properties that are fitted with spray foam. It has been estimated that nearly 250,000 homes in the UK contain this insulation. Some mortgage companies are reluctant to lend due to concerns that poor installation could potentially lead to harmful damp and decay. The Insulation Manufacturers Association has issued a warning that homeowners should be wary of cowboy companies offering to remove insulation.

What's on?

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19th JAN
£195, LONDON

Get to grips with the basics, from replacing taps to unclogging sinks at this hands on workshop.

thegoodlifecentre.co.uk

INTRODUCTION TO HOME DIY

26th JAN
£42.96, LONDON

This comprehensive workshop is perfect for complete beginners or those looking to build their DIY confidence.

eventbrite.co.uk

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4th-6th FEB
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spatex.co.uk

GARDENING IN SMALL SPACES

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thegoodlifecentre.co.uk

ECO WORKSHOP

15th FEB
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Industry experts will be on hand to discuss green designs and sustainable materials to help you with your home building plans.

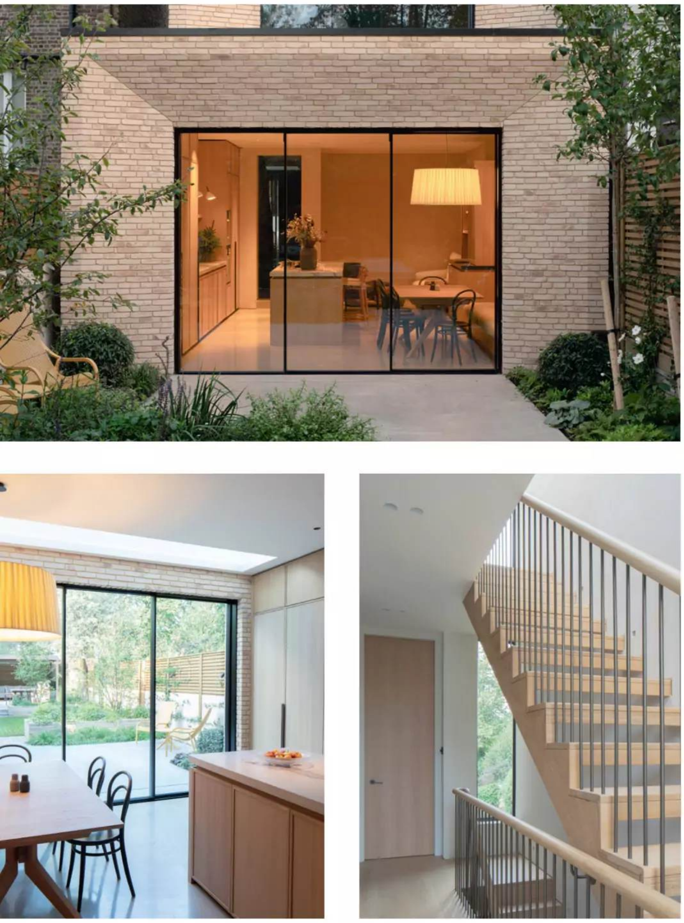
nsbrc.co.uk

INTERIOR LAYOUT WORKSHOP

17th FEB
£60, BRISTOL

Learn how to plan and design your space at an award-winning interior design studio.

stylemongers ofbristol.co.uk



Labour pushes Local Plans to combat planning delays

The Labour party has announced that they will strive to roll out Local Plans for councils as part of its efforts to fast-track planning applications. Alongside the national planning policy framework (NPPF) Local Plans can become a key tool to deem if a project complies with regulations and should therefore be pushed forward. This would allow planning officers the ability to approve applications, without the need for consultation with council committees. Labour has said that such a restructuring to the planning process will alleviate strains on local departments and help speed up decisions. Conservative critics of the scheme argue that the policy undermines collaboration with local people, though this rather ignores the fact that communities are consulted on Local Plans in the first place.

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need to know

Installing EV charging points

Despite some media reports, electric vehicle (EV) driving and ownership is growing. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders estimates that there will be approximately 480,000 battery electric vehicle (BEV) sales in 2025, up 31% from last year. Since a change to Building Regs in June 2022, new build homes in England are legally required to have electric car charging points if there is an associated parking space. For self builders, installation is a cost-effective project.

Typically, you won't need to obtain planning permission to set up a wall-mounted or freestanding model for a new build, as the works fall under permitted development (PD). However, if you live in a listed property, a conservation area, a privately managed community, or a protected location, you should check with your local planning authority or relevant building committees. They will be able to confirm whether installation is permitted, as guidelines can vary between councils.

The average cost for EV installation is around £400, and the work should usually take no more than a day. It's imperative a qualified electrician assembles the equipment to ensure your safety, the functionality of the charger and, in some cases, maintain validity of warranties. Prices may vary based on the amount of material and labour required. For instance, if the cable run exceeds 10m or if installation requires drilling through two walls, the cost will rise accordingly.

Another key point to consider is placement. You'll need to ensure any wall-mounted charging points allow easy access for your car. Freestanding pedestals offer greater flexibility for suitable locations and can reduce installation costs if you dig and backfill the cable trench yourself. Early communication with your electrician can help to prioritise careful location planning and work out the best routes to hide cable runs.

The electrical connection required to charge your battery will depend on its size, charging speed, charger model, and whether you have a single or three-phase supply. You can easily get an electrician to conduct a survey on your circuit's supply if you are unsure. Charging models tend to vary between 7.3kW and up to 22kW per hour, so check your car's requirements to ensure you specify the most suitable option.

For a sustainable solution, opt for an EV charger that is compatible with solar PV panels. Any excess energy will be sent to the device to reduce the demand on the national grid. Some models will also allow you to adjust if electricity is to come from solar panels only, a mix of PV and grid, or grid only.

When designing your dream house, think long term. Future-proof your property by choosing a charger that is compatible with developing EV standards and the Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP). As electric cars start to become the norm, installing a charger at home is not only more convenient for you but is an attractive feature for any future buyers.

MANDY SIMPSON is the brand director of Simpson & Partners, founded in 2021. Since 2024, she has been part of the management and communications team, driving the brand towards greater success with her innovative product vision. For more information visit **simpson-partners.com**

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Hand-built in the UK, this cast iron radiator is made from high-quality iron straight from Paladin's own dedicated foundry. With a selection of colours and finishes, each radiator is made bespoke to suit your home. Paladin Victoriana three column radiator 745mm x 1,000mm, £950, paladinradiators.com

£404.95

Made from steel and finished with an anthracite powder coating, this column design adds a traditional touch to the home. Add radiator feet to complete the look. Milano Windsor anthracite traditional triple column appliance 600mm x 810mm, £404.95, bestheating.com

product news

Great shopping ideas for your custom home project

ENERGY-EFFICIENT UPGRADE ↑

This secondary glazing system can be made bespoke for any window to create an insulated air gap. The CosyGlazing and invisible draughtproofing service is perfect for sash windows in period and listed homes. **CosyGlazing and invisible draughtproofing, from £2,000 per window, mitchell anddickinson.co.uk**

VERSATILE FINISHES ↑

This inventive material can be moulded into any shape, providing a sleek surface to enhance the look of your walls and kitchen countertops.**HIMACS surface in Gravilla snow, from £330 per linear metre, lxhausys.com**

SMART WATER SAFETY →

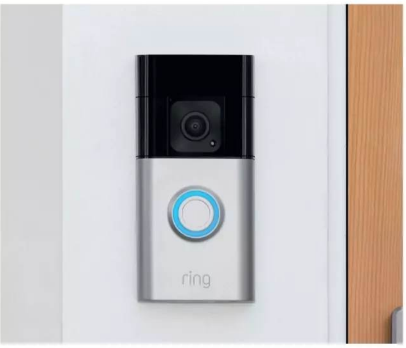
Aqara's innovative valve controller pairs seamlessly with water leak sensors and mobile app to create a water management system that offers 24/7 leak monitoring and automatic emergency shutoff. **Aqara Valve Controller T1, £69.99, aqara.com**

CONVENIENT COOKING ↓

Make food preparation that little bit easier with this stylish wall-mounted pot filler tap. Easily installed above a hob, the extendable arm can be neatly folded away for efficient access. **Pento PEN/SS pot filler tap in stainless steel, £293.54, caple.co.uk**

3 of the best SMART HOME ENTRANCE SYSTEMS

1 *Netatmo Video Doorbell,* **£279.99, netatmo.com**



2 *Ring Battery Video Doorbell Plus,* **£129.99, ring.com**

3 *Reolink Video Doorbell PoE,* **£89.99, reolink.com**

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interiors notebook

Combine timeless designs with warm creams and bold blues for a modern farmhouse look

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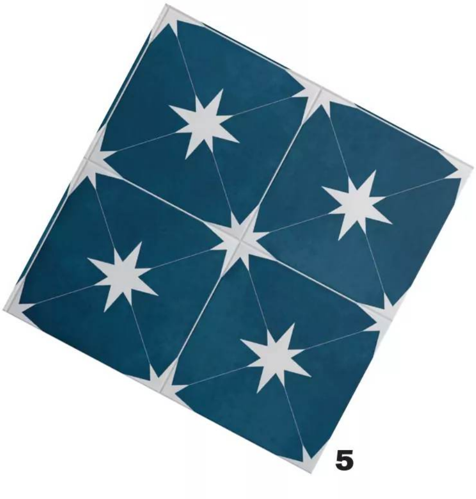

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Shopping list

1 *A stunning centrepiece, this range cooker features three ovens, classic cast iron hot and simmer plates, and a three-zone induction hob.* **Everhot 120i cooker in cream, £12,750, everhot.co.uk**

2 *Bring the serenity of the countryside indoors with this tin boat bath. The exquisitely crafted design creates the perfect place to unwind.* **BC Designs Boat Bath in tin, from £5,703, bcdesigns.co.uk**

3 *Pictured in a warm shade of cream, this chair comes in an array of different painted finishes for you to create an eclectic, mix-and-match look.* **Spindleback chair in classic cream, £125, cotswoldco.com**

4 *This dresser is hand built and painted bespoke for your home. The stylish open shelves allow any household curio to take pride of place.* **Milbrook dresser in pearl, £1,450, painted furnitureco.co.uk**

5 *Made from porcelain, these striking matt tiles are suitable for walls and floors. Their rich blue tones and star motif add a playful, rustic flair.* **Art Ponent tiles, £31.37 per m², directtile--warehouse.com**

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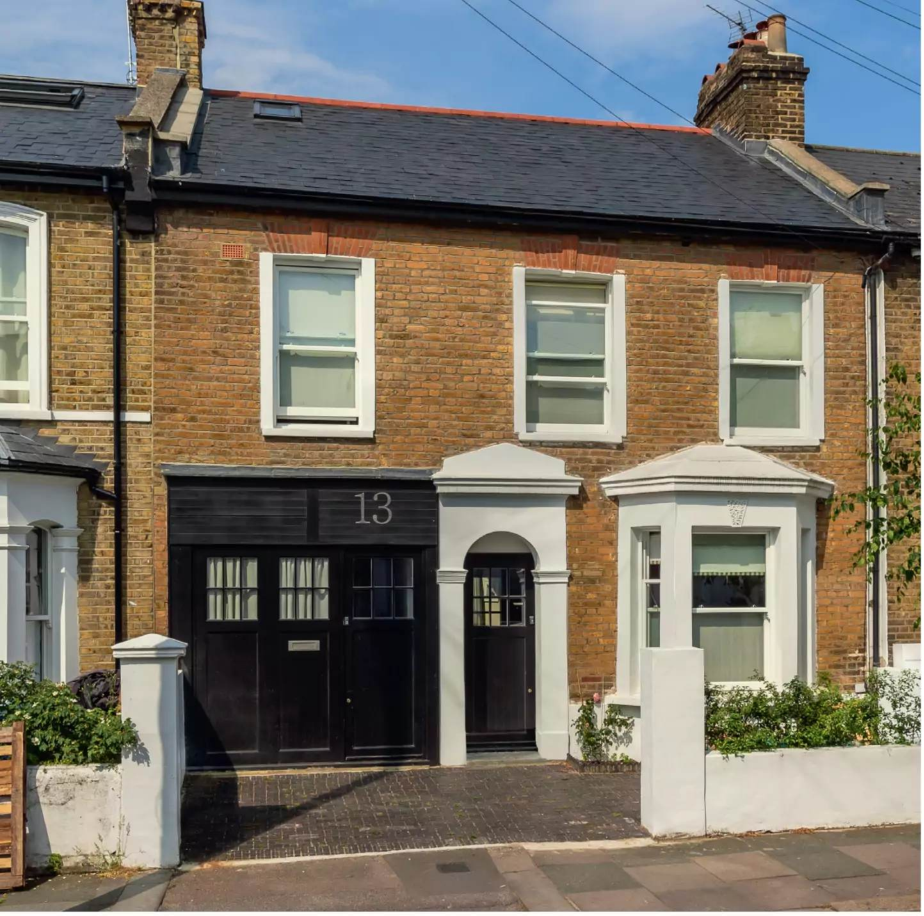
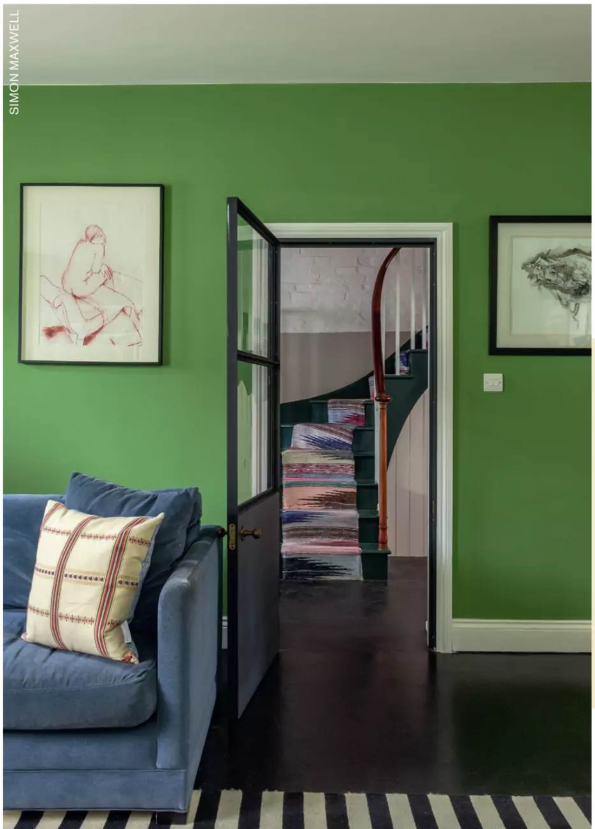
Discover more about Paul and Mandy's *self-build story*.



GARAGE CONVERSION IDEAS

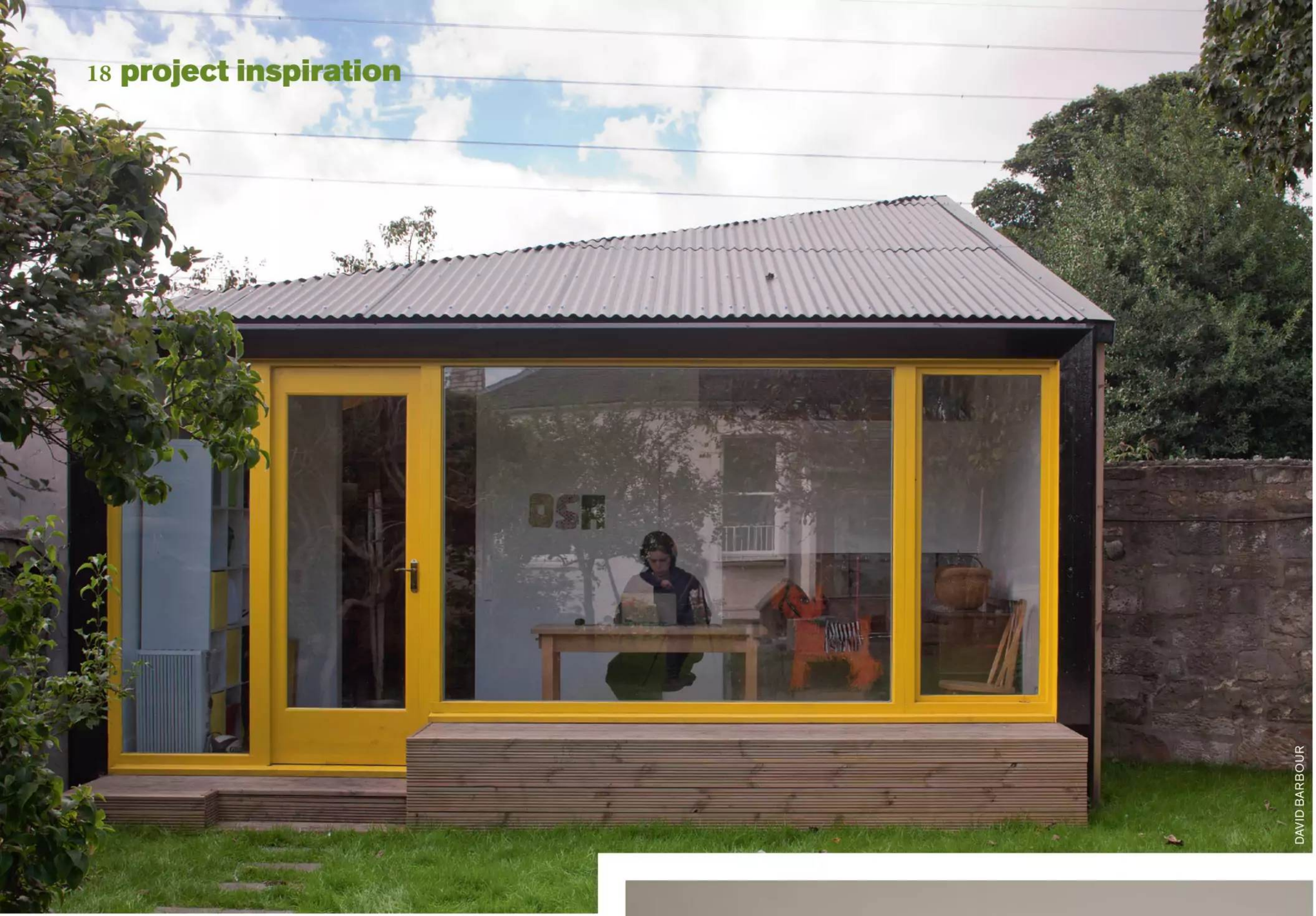
SIMON MAXWELL



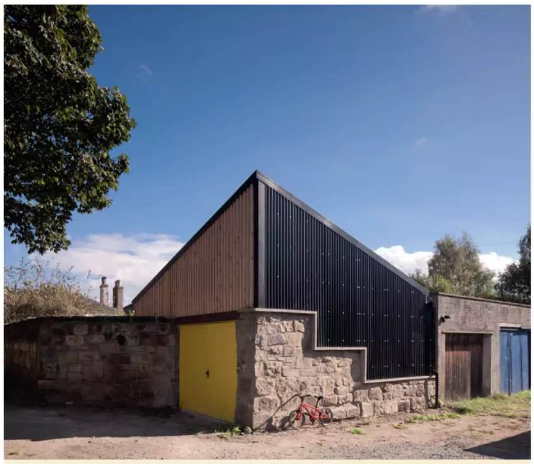
Increasing your property's usable floorspace with a garage conversion, or turning a detached structure into a home, could be one of the best routes to a new, multifunctional space. **Sander Tel** takes a look at seven inspiring real-life designs

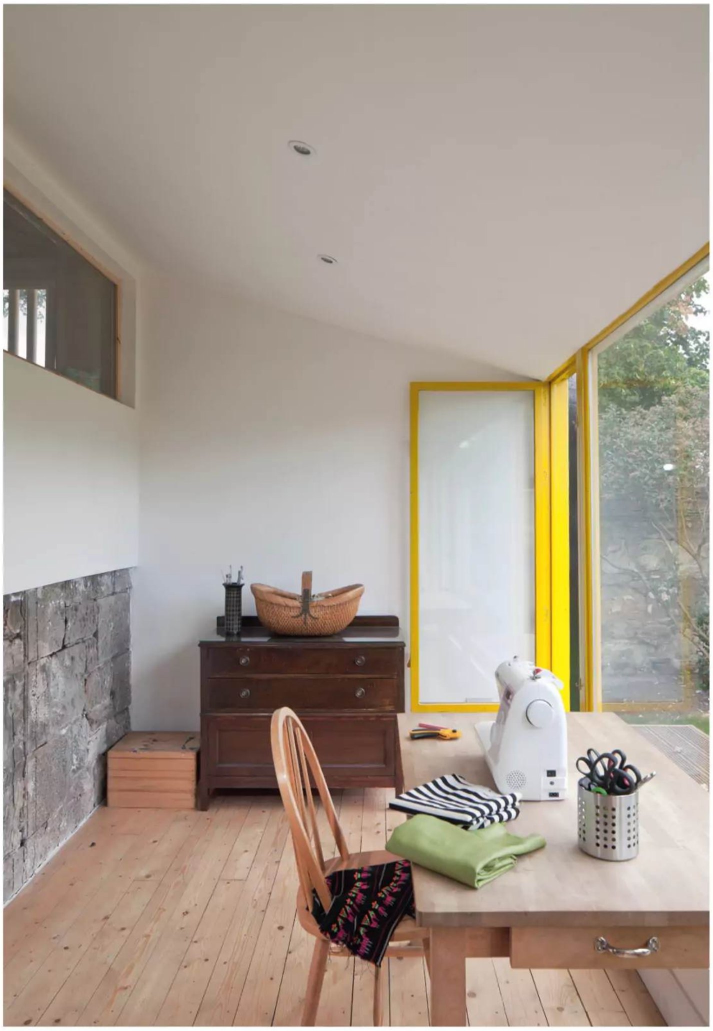
USEFUL UPGRADE

Build It reader Alice Constable Maxwell transformed her Victorian terraced house with a full renovation and extension. The project involved converting the 19m² garage to maximise the home's floorplan and habitable space. The work was completed under permitted development (PD) rights and required a subfloor to be added to the garage structure, with a waterproofing membrane beneath, but no extra insulation was needed. The original side-hinged doors were replaced with a contemporary, sliding and folding model that can be opened to allow bicycles to be carried in and out with ease. A built-in front door – which the couple utilises as their main entry point – makes for convenient access.



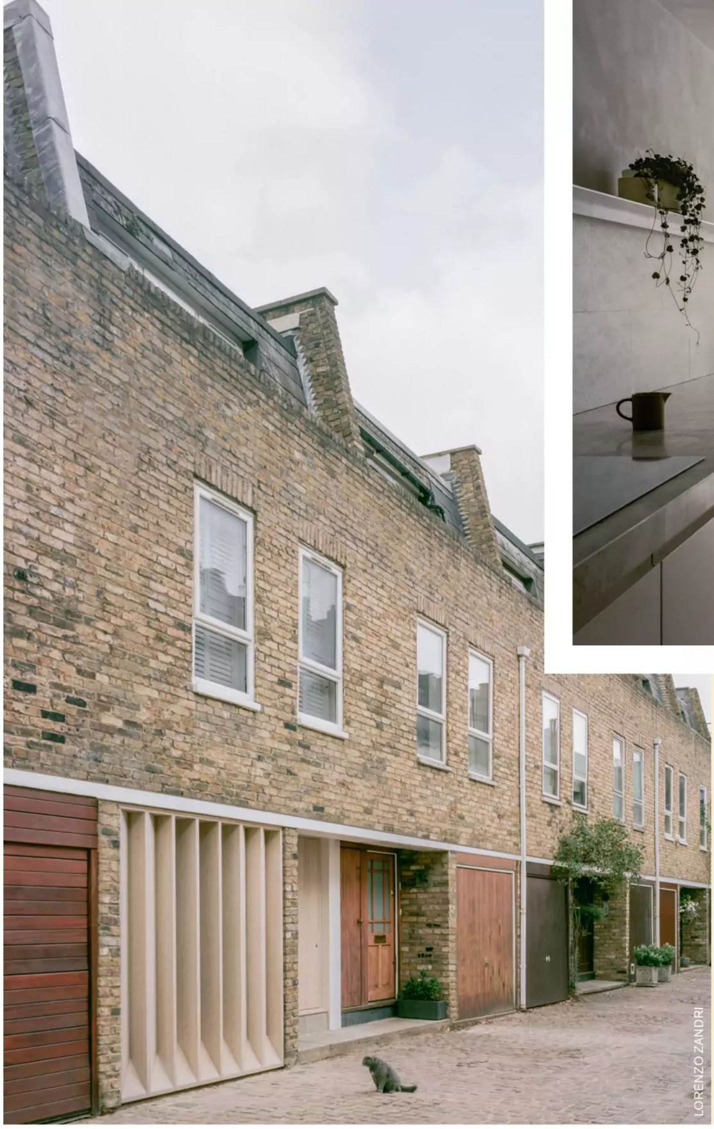
DAVID BARBOUR





FAMILY LIVING

Seeking extra space without leaving their home in Portobello, Scotland, this family converted the dilapidated stone garage at the end of their garden. Designed by Chambers McMillan Architects, the scheme incorporates a workshop, studio and a mezzanine den above with a unique, asymmetric roof. The design embraces exposed materials both inside and out, such as tin, timber cladding and OSB boards. The fully-glazed elevation helps to establish a strong connection to the garden, while the yellow framing calls back to the garage's original door. (Chambers McMillan have now evolved into two practices: Studio McMillan Architects **www.studiomcmillan.com**, and Mind the Gap Inclusive Design Consultancy **www.mind-the-gap.space**)


LORENZO ZANDRI

GOOD AS NEW

This garage conversion project by Trewhela Williams involved transforming a ground-floor courtyard house on a quiet cobbled mews in north London. Opening up the floorplan and street-facing facade created an opportunity to enhance natural light inside and improve cross-ventilation. As the home falls within a conservation area, any alterations to the front of the house needed to be carefully considered. The repeating wood panels nod to the mews' origins as coach accommodation. The new raised deck floor and insulated cavity wall construction has improved the thermal performance of the home, with double-glazed units to the front and rear achieving U-values of 1.4W/m^{2}K and 1.37W/m^{2}K. **(www.trewhelawilliams.com)**

GARAGE CONVERSION FAQs ANSWERED

DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

A straightforward garage renovation that involves mostly internal work will be considered permitted development (PD), so won't usually need formal planning consent. In some cases, though, such as in conservation areas, PD rights for a change of use from garage to residential may have been removed. So, consult the local authority before you begin. For peace of mind, you could apply for a lawful development certificate.

Some houses are subject to restrictive covenants, which may require the garage to be retained as parking rather than converting it completely. These would need to be discharged and it's likely you will require formal planning permission to progress with the project.

A full planning application will also be needed if you want to make significant changes to the garage's street-facing appearance, such as adding wow-factor glazing, upgrading the exterior cladding materials or adding on an extension.

WILL I REQUIRE BUILDING REGS APPROVAL?

As this type of project involves a change of use, you will normally require Building Regulations approval. If you're working with a builder, they'll know the regulations your project must meet, but it's wise to research key areas like fire safety, ventilation, and thermal performance to ensure these are considered early in the design.

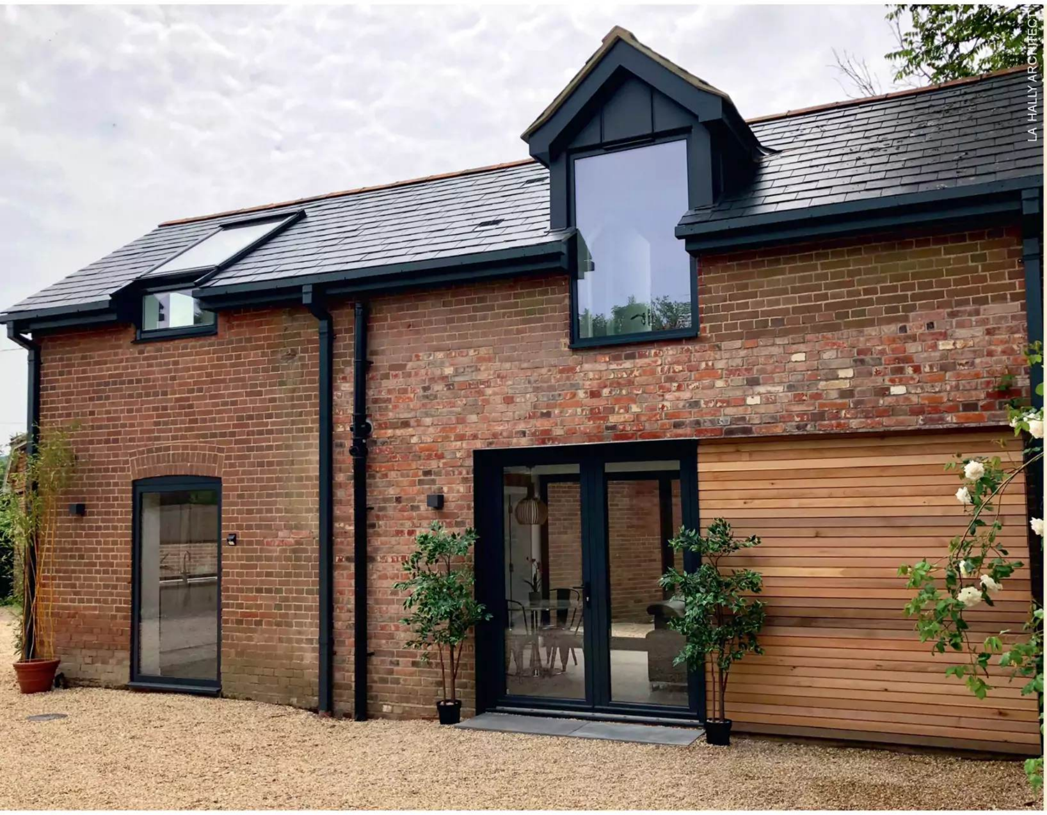
If your project is going to impact any shared or adjoining walls, you'll also need to serve a Party Wall Notice to your neighbours between two months and a year before any building work starts.

CAN I DIY A CONVERSION?

Taking on a DIY garage conversion can be a great option for those with a slightly more limited budget and a simple project, allowing you to design and carry out the work yourself. You will, however, need to use certified installers for electrics and plumbing if your garage conversion requires heating. Another great option could be enlisting the skills of a garage conversion specialist – who will be able to assist with the planning, design and build stages. An architect will be able to aid you in developing a design that satisfies strict planning rules and may help if you are working with a difficult structure.

WILL A GARAGE CONVERSION BOOST MY HOME'S VALUE?

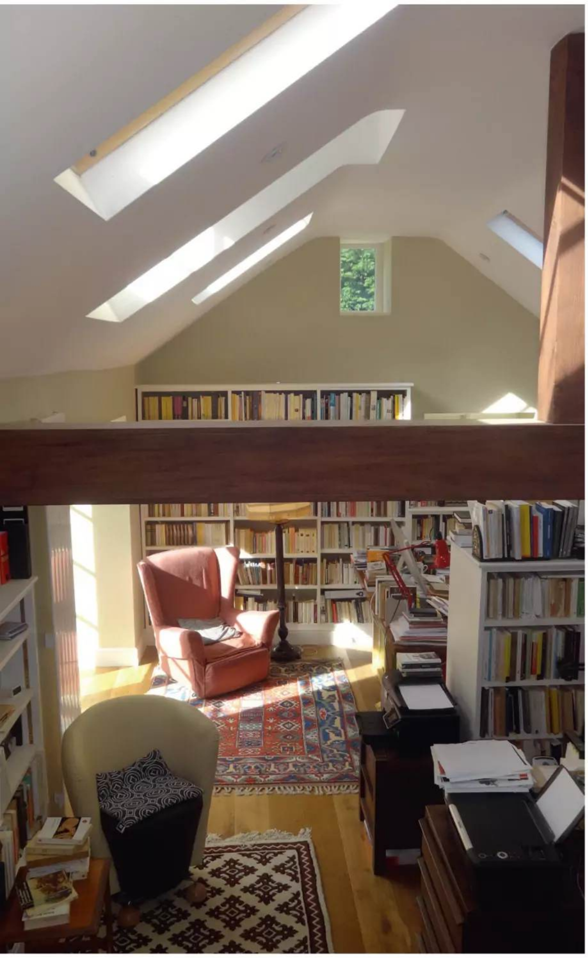
If you have the opportunity, a garage conversion can add great value to your home. Checkatrade.com estimates that this type of project can boost your property's value by 20%, with extra bedrooms being the best investment. A single garage, for example, will offer around 15m^2 of floor space; more than enough for a new living zone, separate playroom, guest bedroom, or even an accessible downstairs shower and WC. It's important to consider factors such as whether you need the additional rooms, parking issues, or if there's a ceiling price in your area, for example. You can always discuss your plans with a surveyor to work out whether it's the right investment.

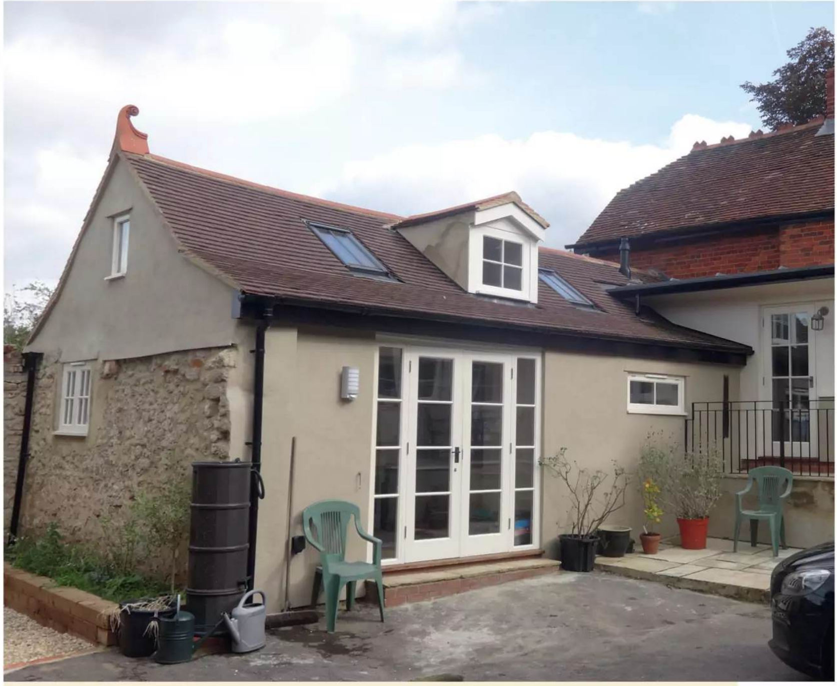


LA HALLY ARCHITECT

RURAL REVIVAL

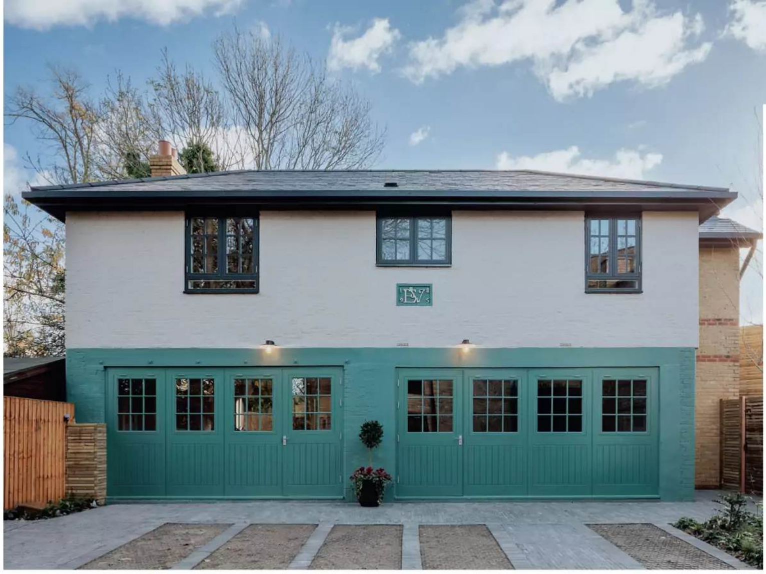
Build It readers George and Rebekah Burn renovated the old coach house on their plot. They turned the garage on the lower-storey into an open-plan, light-filled living area, with accommodation above. The couple worked with LA Hally Architect on the conversion scheme, which sailed through the planning process despite being situated within a conservation area. The redevelopment involved filling in the building's carriage entrance, which was bricked in, and then finished with sleek cedar cladding. Floor-to-ceiling glazing floods the kitchen-living-dining area with natural light. This contemporary zone leads out to a courtyard, which is separate from the garden of the main house. **(www.lahally.com)**

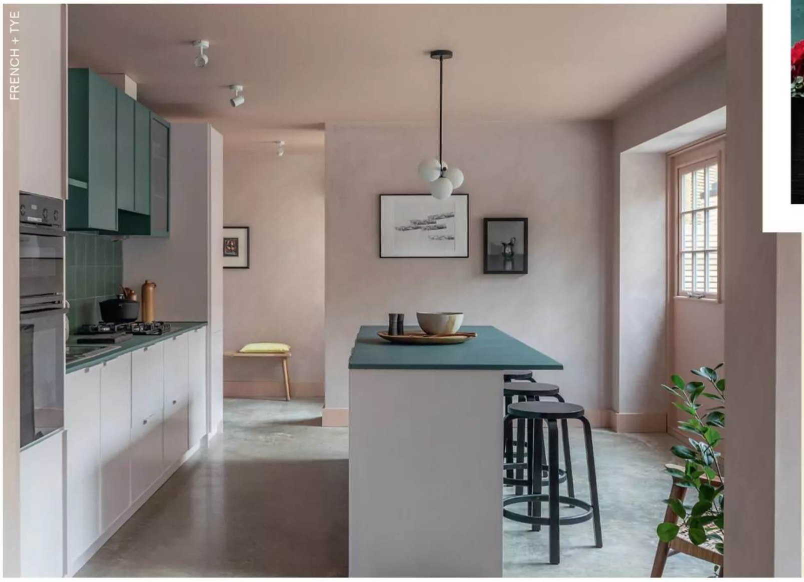




UNLOCKED POTENTIAL

Designed by Lapd Architects, this project involved the conversion of an existing dilapidated garage into a home office and library for an academic family. The conversion is connected to the main house via a glazed link and features vaulted ceilings with rooflights to flood the space with natural light. Externally, the architecture mirrors that of previous extensions with render and painted timber windows and doors, creating a classic and cohesive finish to this property's design. **(www.lapdarchitects.co.uk)**





FRENCH + TYE

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

MW Architects breathed new life into an old coach house with this garage conversion project. The lower storey has been completely transformed into modern, comfortable living spaces, complete with light-filled interiors. The garage-looking facade has been retained both inside and outside the building to bring the initial structure's character into the modern day. **(www.mwarchitects.co.uk)**

EXPERT VIEW CREATING A COMFORTABLE SPACE

BOGDAN RUSU
from Vatraa Architecture answers your questions about developing a functional design

DO I HAVE ENOUGH CEILING HEIGHT & FLOOR SPACE?

A typical garage space has a floor-to-ceiling height of around 2.1m or more. Introducing additional floor insulation, substrates and finishes may reduce this by 7-20cm, so specifying slimline insulation can help preserve head room, though it may increase costs. Aim for 2m minimum of clear ceiling height and a good amount of natural light. With an average floor area of $20m^2$ or more, most garages provide sufficient space for a new room without requiring an extension, making them a versatile project.

HOW SHOULD I APPROACH UPGRADING THE EXTERIOR?

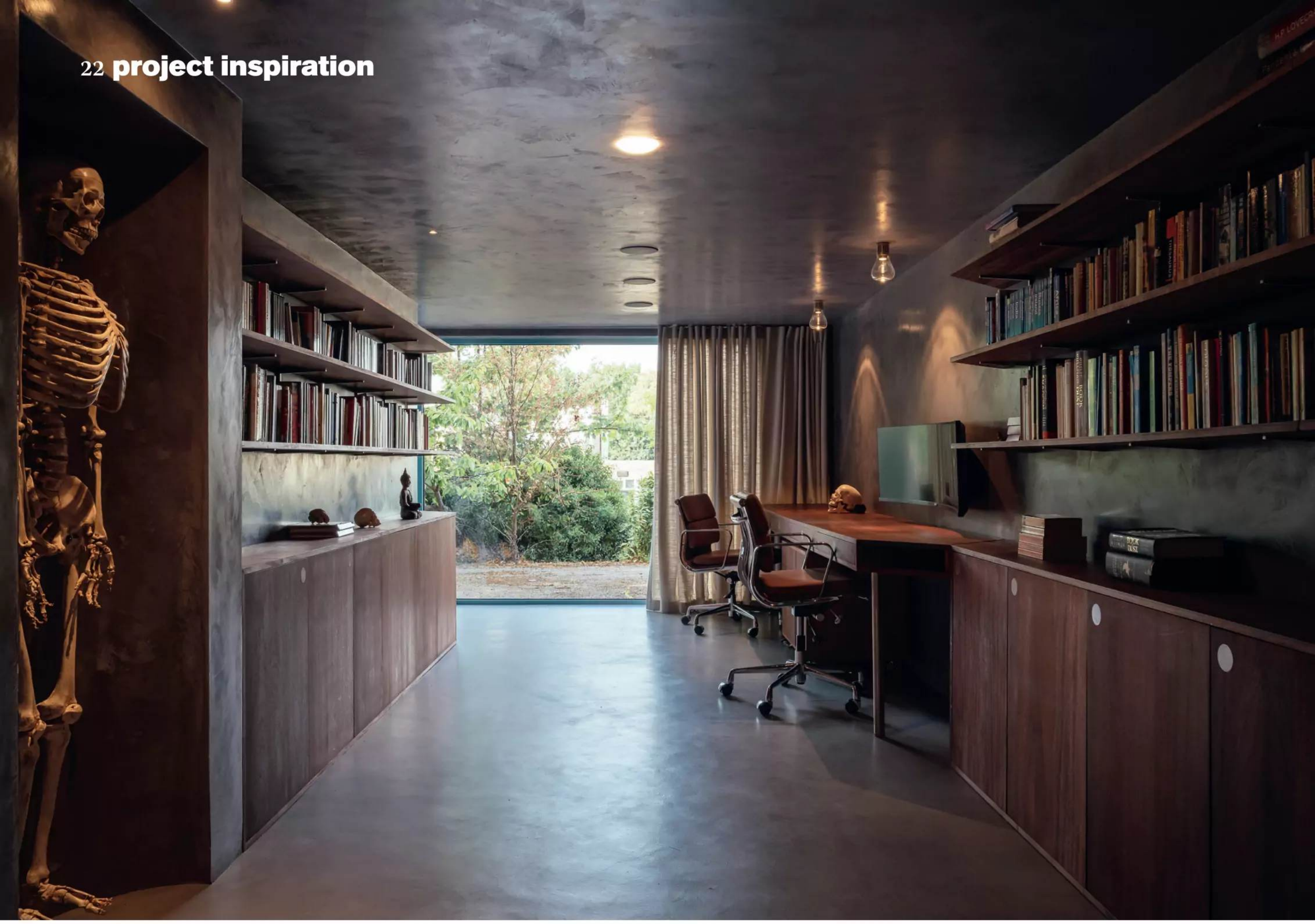
Replacing the old garage door with high-quality glazed windows or doors is ideal for ensuring thermal performance while maximising natural light inside. The new design should complement the original house's exterior facade and adhere to any planning regulations. External cladding materials can always be preserved if they're in good condition. For access, if the garage is beneath the main floors, a staircase could be installed, with careful consideration to fire safety regulations. If the garage adjoins the house, it could be seamlessly integrated into the ground floor using similar materials.

HOW CAN I ENSURE A COSY, WELL-INSULATED INTERIOR?

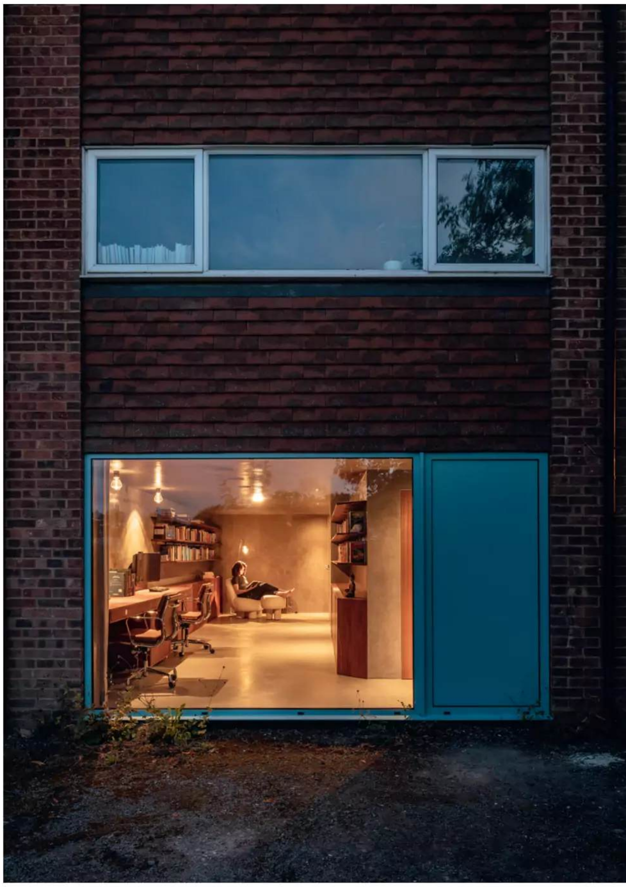
Proper insulation is essential for a comfortable space. Depending on the original garage's condition, additional insulation may be needed for the floor, ceiling or walls. High-quality vacuum insulation is ideal where ceiling height is limited, offering great thermal performance with minimal thickness. Wall insulation can be internal or external, based on space and planning requirements. For heating, radiators are a cost-effective solution if integrated into the design, while underfloor heating (UFH) is ideal for saving space or warming up large, open-plan areas. Be mindful that the home's consumer unit may need to be upgraded to support the new electrical system.

WHAT IS THE BEST USE OF A GARAGE CONVERSION?

Garage conversions are incredibly flexible and can be adapted to suit various needs. A popular choice, especially post-pandemic, is transforming the space into a home office, ideal for remote working. Depending on the garage's size and its connection to the main house, it can also be converted into a utility room, self-contained annexe, expanded kitchen or an additional living area. If there is room, combining a garage conversion with an extension offers even more possibilities, allowing homeowners to tailor the space to their specific lifestyle and enhance their property's overall functionality.



JIM STEPHENSON



OUT WITH THE OLD

Vatraa Architecture helped this family transform their end-of-terrace 1970s house in Crystal Palace, London, by converting the lower ground floor garage into a multifunctional office area. The space's main constraint was its depth (eight metres) and how this could facilitate natural light flow throughout the day. Vatraa worked around this with an innovative design that features full-height glazing in place of the original garage door, allowing light to flood the space and bounce off the polished plaster surfaces. **(www.vatraa.com)**

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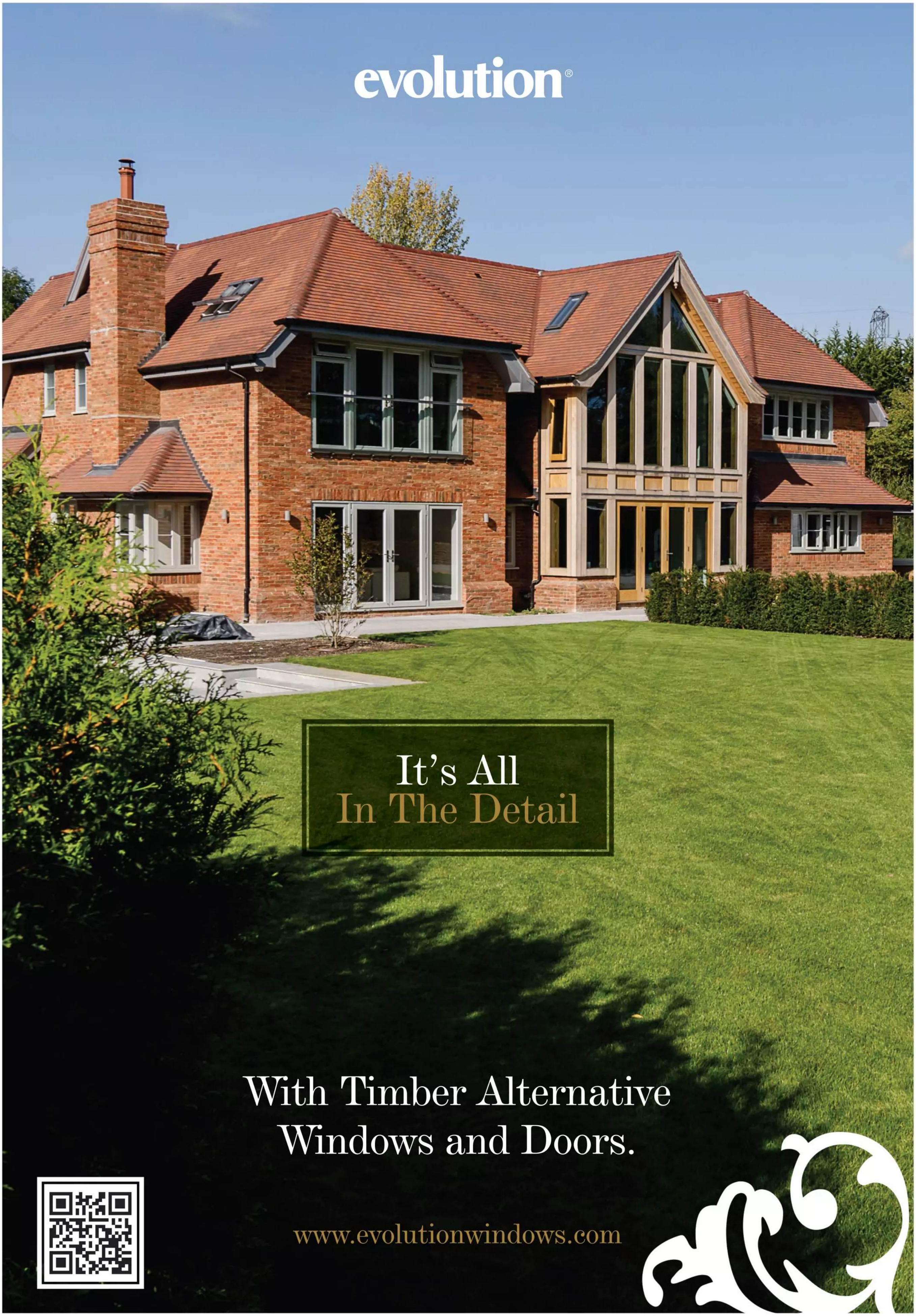
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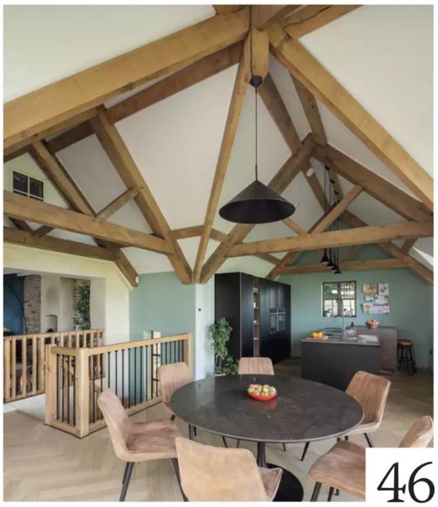
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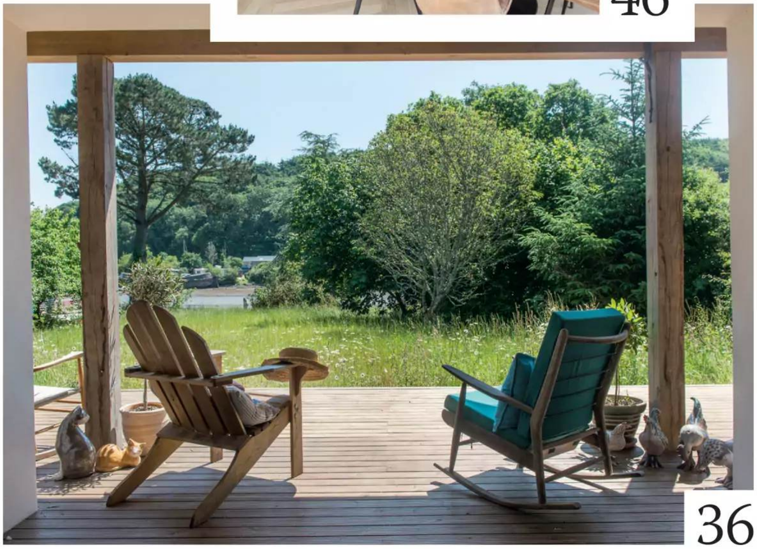
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26 **BEHIND THE FACADE**

Experienced renovators Fiona and Martin Lamb transformed their neo-Georgian property into a home that's more than it appears at first sight

36 **TRANSFORMATION BY DESIGN**

After discovering significant flaws in the construction of a bungalow she planned to renovate, Zoe Freeman decided to create a whole new sustainable home by the idyllic Helford River

46 **HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

Unable to resist its charm and potential, Julian and Abigail Bernard sympathetically renovated and extended a 19th century lodge to create an incredible family house

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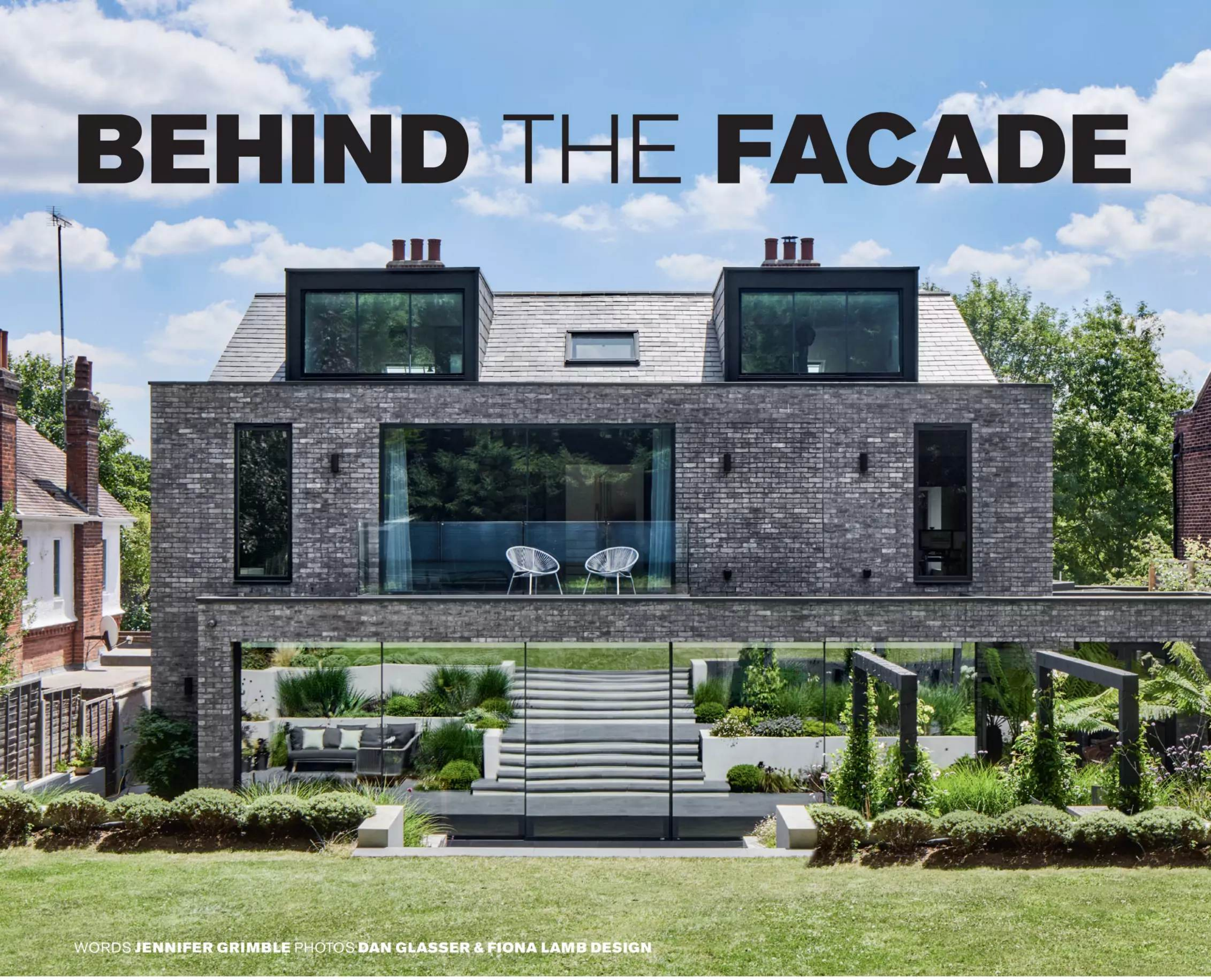
BEHIND THE FACADE



WORDS **JENNIFER GRIMBLE** PHOTOS **DAN GLASSER & FIONA LAMB DESIGN**

Fiona and Martin Lamb bought a neo-Georgian residence with a view to renovating it. Little did they know, they'd end up building a brand new home behind the protected front elevation

After having their third child, Fiona and Martin Lamb began searching for a bigger home to accommodate the whole family. The couple eagerly embraced the challenge of renovating a property to create their dream home. However, they hadn't anticipated the full scope of work involved when they purchased a grand neo-Georgian house in Crouch End, London. "We've always done work on our previous homes and were prepared to roll up our sleeves and pitch in," says Fiona. "We thought we were taking on a big renovation project, so we were anticipating some hard work ahead."

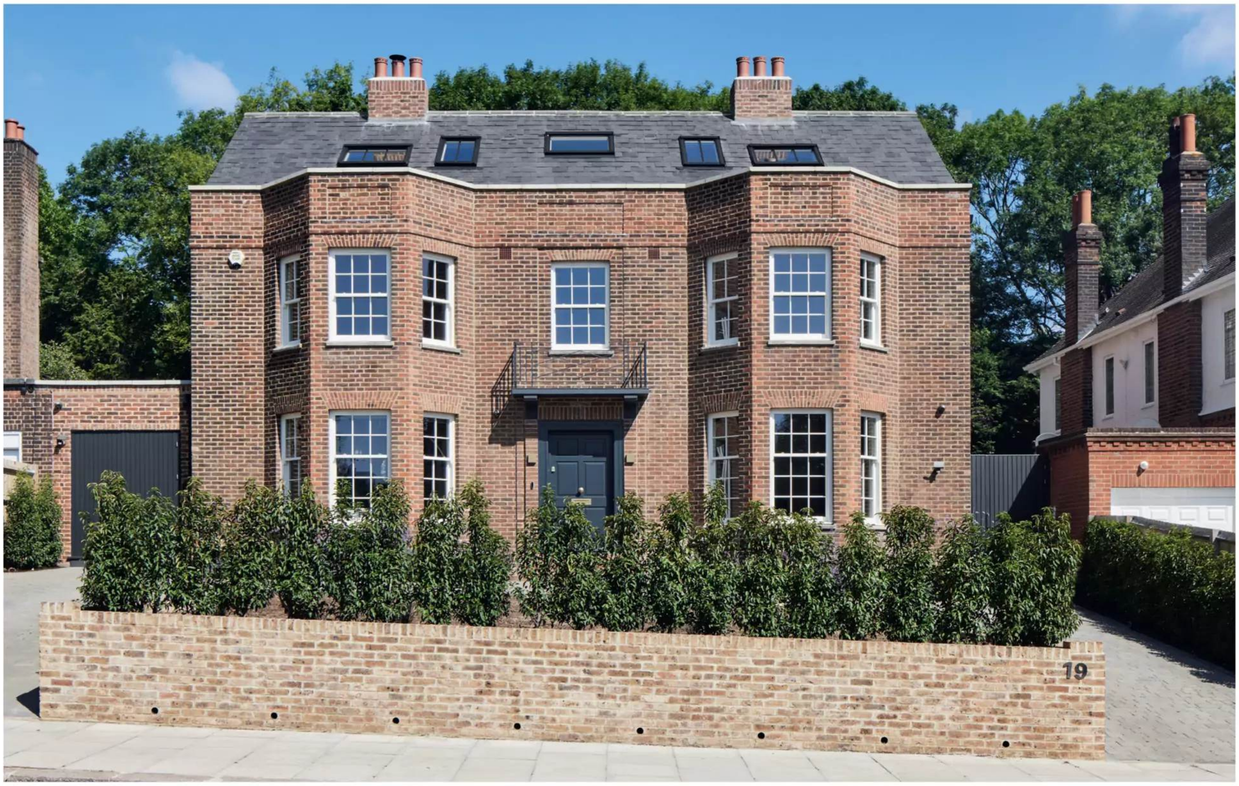
While the 1920s house was liveable, it hadn't been modernised in decades. It featured small, impractical rooms and poorly considered extensions that left the ground floor feeling disjointed. The rear of the property was also extremely dark. "The garden at the back sloped up into a steep bank, so it felt like being in a basement when you were in the back rooms," says Martin. "But we loved the home's location. It's opposite playing fields, so there's a lovely sense of space that you don't tend to find very often in London."

Recognising its potential, the Lambs knew they needed an architect to help them transform the outdated building into a practical and attractive family home. Their main aim was to create living spaces suitable for their busy day-to-day lives and to draw in more natural light. "Another important thing for us was to make the house feel like part of the garden," says Fiona. "There's a big, beautiful plot outside but you just couldn't see it from inside the house."

A change of plan

The couple initially approached three design firms and selected Mulroy Architects. "They'd done work for three of our friends, so we had good insight into them as a company and how they worked," says Fiona. "They are also local, so knew the planning department well and understood what would be permissible. That was a big plus."

Chief architect, Andrew Mulroy, worked closely with Fiona and Martin to reimagine the property. "We knew roughly how we wanted the floorplan to work and had some good design ideas, but we needed Andrew to come in and make them a reality," says Martin. "Initially, the plan was to renovate, but as the design developed, we



Above: The front of the 1920s neo-Georgian residence has been perfectly retained. Fresh lime mortar pointing and new heritage-inspired sash windows, from N.T.G Glassworks, finish the look

Left: Three distinct zones – a ground-floor living space, first-floor terrace and loft with two symmetrical dormers – ensure the rear of the property contrasts with the traditional facade

FACT FILE

NAMES Fiona & Martin Lamb
OCCUPATIONS Garden designer & IT manager
LOCATION Crouch End, north London
TYPE OF PROJECT Demolition, facade retention & rebuild
PROJECT ROUTE Commissioned architect & builder, project managed by builder & homeowners
BOUGHT November 2016
HOUSE COST £3,600,000
HOUSE SIZE 500m²
PLOT SIZE 1,200m²
PROJECT COST £1,505,400
PROJECT COST PER M² £3,011
BUILDING WORK COMMENCED Feb 2019
WORK COMPLETED July 2022
VAT RECLAIMED £32,000
CURRENT VALUE Circa £6,000,000

Above & right: The open plan living space is Fiona and Martin's favourite area. Neatly divided into a kitchen, dining zone and lounge, the space is fully integrated with the garden, thanks to frameless, floor-to-ceiling sliding doors, specified with solar-protected glass

realised we were actually altering the majority of the house." To evaluate their options, Andrew proposed conducting a feasibility study to help them understand the necessary work and spending. An external company, Potter Raper, was hired to do early-stage cost modelling. The review examined whether it would be more cost-effective and energy-efficient to renovate the existing building or to demolish it and start anew. "They looked at every aspect of the building and on almost every count, determined it would be more effective for us demolish and build something new," says Fiona.

Although taking on a self build was never on the cards for the couple, doing so allowed them to create a more spacious layout tailored to their requirements, and integrate a complete thermal upgrade, bringing the house up to modern standards. "By building something new, we were able to improve the flow through to the garden and solve the cold, damp and darkness problems," says Martin. "We had the added benefit of saving on VAT, too."

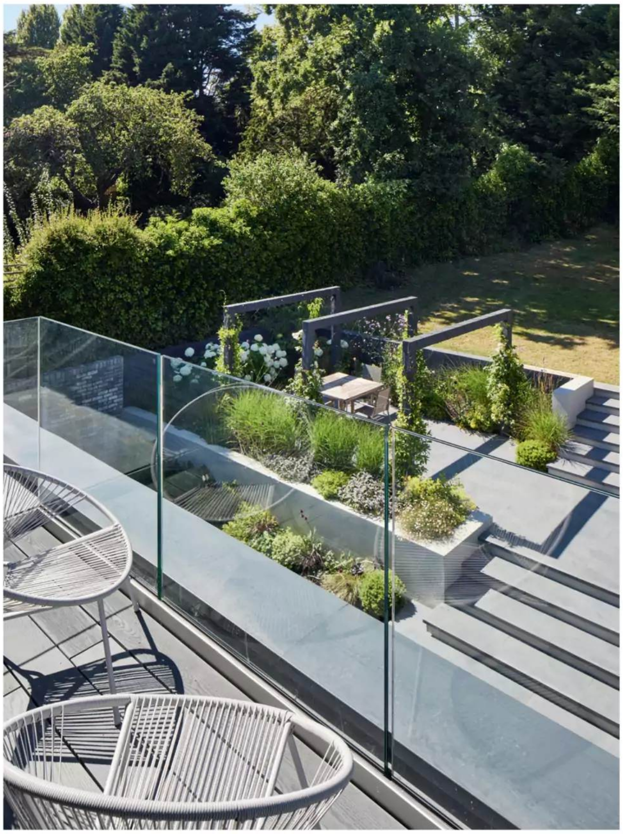
Strict stipulations

Although not listed, the property lies within the Crouch End Conservation Area and is considered a building of architectural importance. So, Andrew submitted a pre-planning application to determine what would be permissible. Haringey Council came back with a few unexpected stipulations. "We were told we had to retain the front facade of the property, since there's a replica home next door," says Fiona. "Everything viewed from the road, including the flank walls, had to look exactly the same as before."

This wasn't the council's only requirement. "The rear of the property wasn't allowed to resemble the front in any way," says Martin. "The planners wanted it to be very clear which part of the building was old and which was new. So much so that we weren't even allowed to use the same red bricks at the back."

To meet the council's terms, Mulroy Architects proposed constructing a completely new steel frame home behind the original facade. The design incorporated cavity brick and block walls, enabling the use of high-performance Rockwool insulation. Internally, the front four rooms – both on the ground and first floor – would match the original footprint, while the back of the property would feature a spacious living area and kitchen, connected to the garden with contemporary floor-to-ceiling sliding doors.

Andrew also proposed moving the staircase to introduce a clear route through the house. The first floor would feature the four bedrooms, plus the master, with two more on the top floor.



Above & right: With its deep blue colour palette, gold accents and modern parquet flooring from Roundhouse, the master bedroom is stylish and inviting. Sliding doors connect the room to a private balcony that overlooks the garden area

WE LEARNED...

SET UP GOOD RELATIONSHIPS and excellent communication, between yourself, the architect and builder.

CONSIDER THE GARDEN EARLY ON, alongside the design of the building itself, to ensure they're beautifully integrated and work well together.

THERE WILL BE TOUGH DAYS during a big build – it's inevitable! But keep putting your best foot forward, the end result makes it all worth it.

Thanks to the design guidelines that were revealed during the pre-planning process, consent was achieved in three months and the project was put out to tender. "Martin and I had no clue about builders, but Andrew had lots of recommendations," says Fiona. "Around eight companies responded and we whittled them down to three." The couple chose Kantec Bespoke after visiting a few of their recent projects and speaking with their clients. "We did a lot of due diligence, so we felt confident in our decision."

The rebuild

Chief contractor, Andy McCondach, took on official project management duties, but Andrew, Fiona and Martin were all

Above: The master bathroom features a free-standing tub and walk-in shower, finished with Art Deco-inspired tiles – a nod to the home's 1920s origins. The wall-hung Duravit toilet and Crosswater basins were sourced from MP Moran

The staircase is the centrepiece of the home, connecting each of its three main floors. With oak treads, it boasts bespoke steel balustrades and an architectural brass handrail, designed and crafted by Forging Matters

heavily involved throughout to ensure the project stayed on budget. The couple sold the home they were living in at the time and began renting locally, so they could be present on site as often as required.

Work began in February 2019 with the demolition of the existing structure. Since the local planners specified that the flank walls of the house couldn't be changed, the team at Kantec Bespoke had to painstakingly dismantle the external walls. Each brick was retained, cleaned and safely stored, to be reused for the new side walls when the time came.

Once the original home was demolished, only the neo-Georgian facade remained. To ensure its structural stability, the front elevation had to be supported. "Kantec Bespoke installed a huge steel frame to prop up the face of the house," says Martin. Akin to a giant Meccano set, the frame proved to be a stressful and costly part of the project.

However, the challenges didn't stop there. Before Kantec could begin laying the foundations, the heavens opened. "The weather was terrible," says Fiona. "It rained incessantly for weeks, so the team couldn't get machinery on site – it was too dangerous and slippery." Due to the weather conditions, the Lambs were left with a muddy, clay-filled hole in the back garden for a whole month.

Compounding the challenges, the Covid-19 pandemic struck in early 2020. The site was shut down for about three weeks – the glazing subcontractor couldn't find a way to crane the glass and install the windows while maintaining the required two-metre social distancing. "At this stage, we had quite a few, 'what on earth are we doing' moments," says Fiona. "Luckily, once Kantec were able to get going on site, the house went up relatively quickly."

The project began with the installation of concrete foundations and a beam-and-block suspended ground floor. Following this, the new house was built behind the preserved front elevation. The landscaping took place at the same time – Fiona, a garden designer, liaised with Andrew to ensure the outside space would work perfectly with the house. "We dug out the slope at the back to create more distance between the garden and the rear rooms," says Fiona. "We did all the formation work for the terracing

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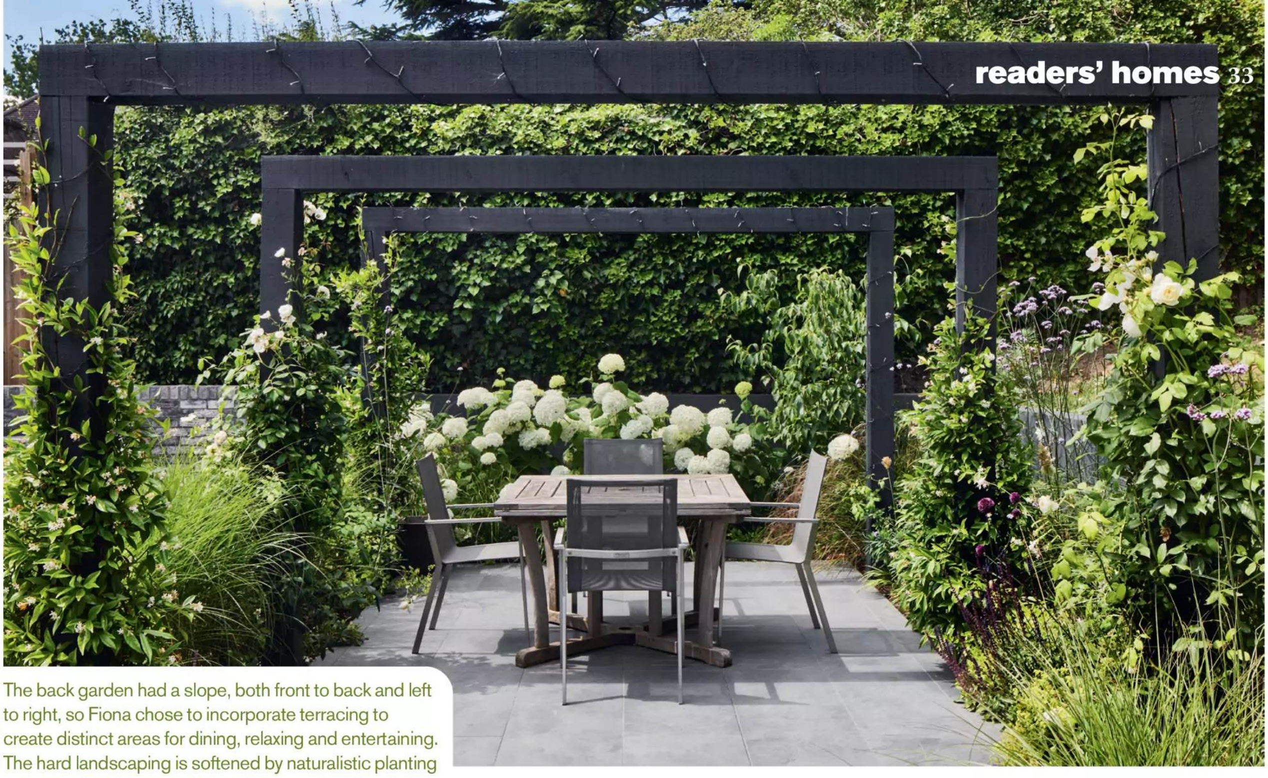


The back garden had a slope, both front to back and left to right, so Fiona chose to incorporate terracing to create distinct areas for dining, relaxing and entertaining. The hard landscaping is softened by naturalistic planting

at the start of the build. I wanted to create lots of different zones within the garden, just like we designed inside the house. I also brought the planting right up to the main structure, so even when you're inside, you get the benefit of feeling connected to the exterior."

Reinvention

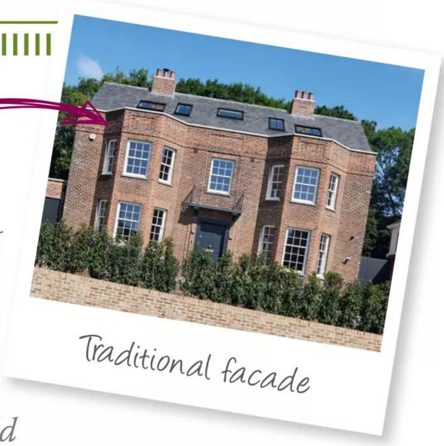
In July 2022, the work was finished. Despite the challenges, the couple are thrilled with their new home and found the self build experience rewarding. "Both Andrew and Andy were fantastic to work with, especially given what we were up against," says Fiona.

From the front of the house, nothing appears to have changed – save for a sensitively planted garden, paved driveway and new tripled-glazed, heritage windows. The exterior was also repointed with lime mortar, to ensure a fresh finish. The front door opens into a light-filled entrance hall, with cosy reception rooms at either side.

Beyond these spaces, the new custom staircase sits at the heart of the home, with an open-plan living area, dining room and kitchen at

closer look

Retaining the front elevation ...



Traditional facade

The neo-Georgian home – designated of local importance – lies within the Crouch End Conservation Area. "This meant that we couldn't knock down the facade, since it matched the neighbouring property," says architect Andrew Mulroy. "To overcome this, we demolished the existing house, setting aside the bricks for re-use, and propped the front elevation up using a steel frame." Kantec Bespoke dug deep trenches in the front garden and inserted four or five huge concrete feet into them. "These pillars held the steel frame that essentially propped up the front of the house," says Andrew. "This maintained its structural stability while the rear of the property was rebuilt." It was a delicate and risky task, so Fiona and Martin took out a structural warranty policy with Build-Zone. Heritage consultants, WS Heritage, were also hired to provide advice and assistance.

the back, connected to the newly landscaped garden via glazed doors. Fiona took charge of the home's interior design, encouraged by Andrew to take bold risks with her colour choices. From the soft greys of the corridors to the bold, dark shades of the kitchen and lounge, alongside gold accents and rich blues elsewhere in the home, the property's contrasting scheme cleverly echoes the juxtaposition of its unique exterior.

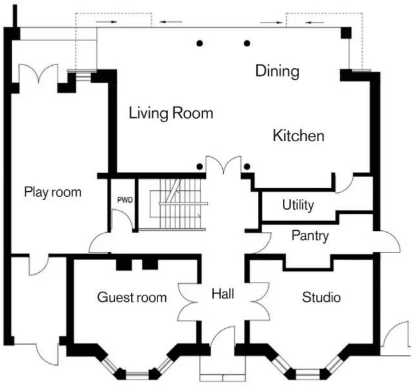
Not only has the house been transformed aesthetically; its energy efficiency has also been upgraded significantly. "Thanks to the new windows and high levels of insulation, the home's energy rating increased from SAP band F to B," says Martin.

For the Lambs, the most rewarding part of the process was seeing the house come together so quickly after a frustratingly slow start. "It was amazing to watch the building develop right in front of our eyes," says Fiona. "Each stage was a big learning curve, but really exciting nonetheless." Their favourite room is the open plan kitchen and living area – a wonderful light-filled space that truly feels like part of the garden, just as they'd set out to achieve. "It's such an airy, happy environment," Fiona continues. "It's great for both unwinding with some low-key family time and entertaining friends."

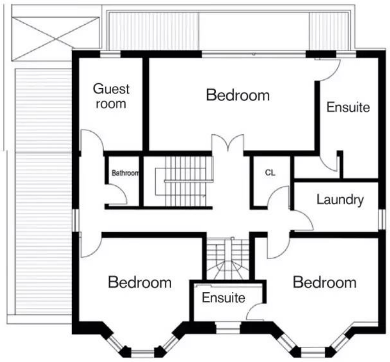
Although they're not deterred from taking on another project later down the line, for now the Lambs are very content with what they've worked so hard so build. "The property works perfectly for us and our whole family," says Fiona. "We've managed to create a house that's more interesting and individual than we could have imagined thanks to the planning constraints, so we have no regrets."

Floor plans

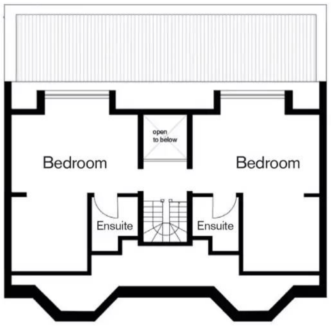
Ground floor



First floor



Second floor



TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m²	Cost %	Total cost
Preliminaries (demolition & facade retention)	£215	7%	£107,600
Foundations	£244	8%	£121,900
External walls & windows (incl. steel frame)	£508	17%	£253,900
Roof structure & coverings	£226	8%	£113,000
Internal walls	£150	5%	£75,000
Floor, wall & ceiling finishes	£253	8%	£126,400
Joinery & fittings	£229	8%	£114,300
Plumbing & heating	£313	10%	£156,500
Electrics	£127	4%	£63,700
Decorating	£48	2%	£24,000
Fees	£413	14%	£206,600
External Works	£285	9%	£142,500
Grand total			**£1,505,400**

Note: The costs shown here reflect the original prices for materials, labour and services at the time this project was undertaken. As a general guide, inflation in the construction market runs at about 3%-4% per annum.

Useful contacts

ARCHITECT **Mulroy Architects** 020 4530 9400 www.mulroyarchitects.com MAIN CONTRACTOR **Kantec Bespoke** 020 3291 2221 www.kantec.co.uk/bespoke LANDSCAPING **Fiona Lamb Design** 07788 748216 www.fionalambdesign.com STRUCTURAL ENGINEER **Symmetrys** 020 8340 4041 www.symmetrys.com BUILDING SURVEYOR **Alexander Lyons** 020 3411 6393 www.al-surveyors.com HERITAGE CONSULTANT **WS Heritage** (formerly The Heritage Advisory) 020 3841 8660 www.ws-heritage.co.uk COST MODELLING/FEASIBILITY STUDY **Potter Raper** 020 7436 5005 www.potterraper.co.uk VAT CONSULTANT **Berthold Bauer Consultants** 01732 868 266 www.bbvat.co.uk BUILDING WARRANTY **Build-Zone** 0345 230 9873 www.build-zone.com BRICKS FURNACE **S.Anselmo** +39 049 930 4711 www.santanselmo.com/en/ INSULATION **Rockwool** 01656 868400 www.rockwool.com/uk/ STAIRCASE **Forging Matters** 01425 837592 www.forgingmatters.co.uk ROOF WINDOWS **The Rooflight Company** 01993 833155 www.therooflightco.com SLIDING DOORS **Maxlight** 020 8896 0700 www.maxlight.co.uk WINDOWS **N.T.G Glassworks** www.n-t-g.co.uk INTERNAL DOORS **Todd Doors** 0800 633 5050 www.todd-doors.co.uk OAK PARQUET FLOORING **Jordan Andrews** 020 8341 9222 www.jordanandrews.com KITCHEN **Roundhouse** 020 7297 6220 www.roundhousedesign.com LIGHTING **Deltalight** 020 7960 5030 www.deltalight.com/en/; **Astro Lighting** 01279 427001 www.astrolighting.com; Tom Dixon 020 3848 6199 www.tomdixon.net/en_gb SANITARYWARE **C.P. Hart** 03458 731121 www.cphart.co.uk; **MP Moran & Sons** 020 7328 5566 www.mpmoran.co.uk TILES **Checkalow** 020 8441 7070 www.checkalow.co.uk EXTERIOR STONE PAVING **London Stone** 01753 212950 www.londonstone.co.uk

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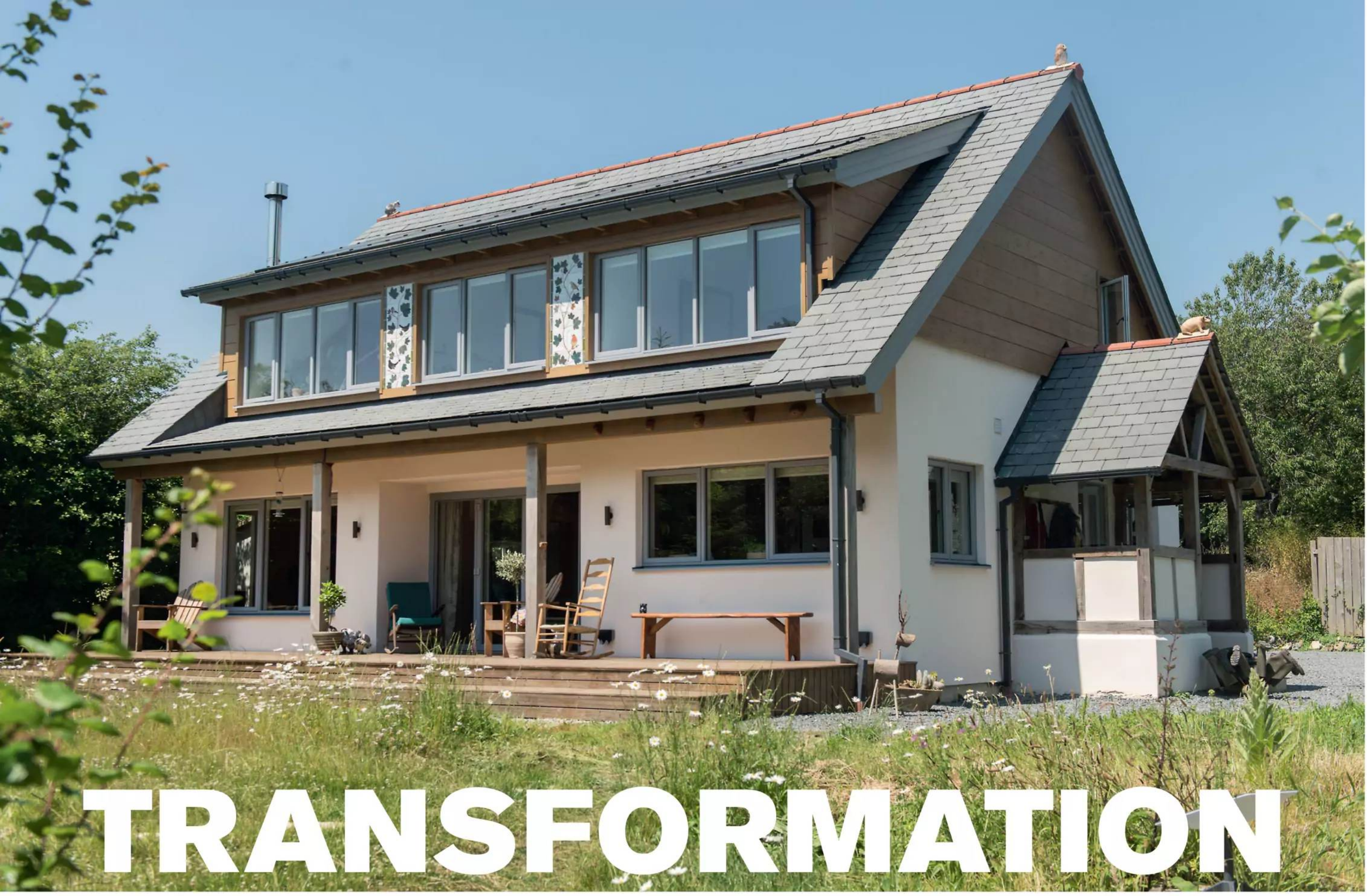


TRANSFORMATION BY DESIGN

When **Zoe Freeman's** 1950s bungalow revealed its flaws, she seized the chance to take on a self build project, crafting a sustainable dream home filled with character and charm

WORDS **RICHARD WEBBER** PHOTOS **COLIN POOLE**

With her positive mindset, Zoe Freeman, a GP, turned challenges into opportunities when her 1950s pebble-dashed bungalow presented a cascade of issues. Things hit rock bottom when a severe water leak in the loft caused significant damage, which was compounded by her insurance company's refusal to cover the costs. This spurred Zoe on to tackle the immediate problem, as well as the many underlying issues her home had been hiding for years. "The bungalow was cheaply built and poorly insulated," says Zoe. "In addition to that, the plumbing was tired and the electrics weren't great either."

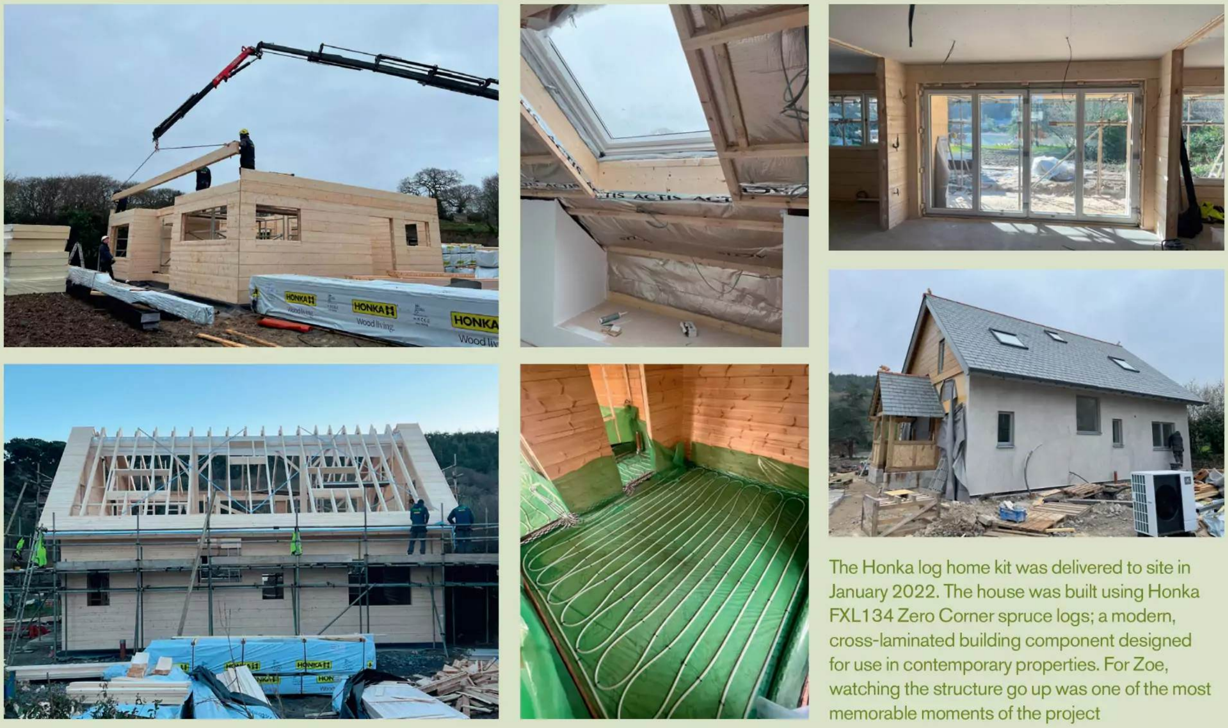
Zoe had been toying with the idea of renovating her dormer property since 2018. She had some big plans and gained planning permission for a transformation project in 2020 – however, when she got some quotes for the works, she had to have a rethink. But upon receiving quotes in excess of £350,000, she considered her options once more. "What bumped up the quotes – which were in excess of £350,000 – was the fact that I wanted to make the downstairs more open-plan by knocking down internal walls."

At a pivotal crossroads, Zoe made the bold decision to demolish the existing property – shared with her partner, Andy, and son, Danny – and build a new home from the ground up. Seeking pre-application advice from her local authority in 2020, she discovered a soil survey was necessary due to the plot's proximity to a historic timber yard, raising concerns about potential contamination. Thankfully, the survey results came back clear, allowing the ambitious project to move forward. "It was a scary moment, though, because if remedial work was needed to remove and replace soil, it would have cost upwards of £30,000," she says.

Design decisions

To gain inspiration for the style of her new home, Zoe turned to her mother, a passionate architecture enthusiast, for help. She sketched the initial designs, incorporating all of Zoe's wishes. "I wanted the house to be sympathetic to the previous dormer

THE BUILD IN PROGRESS



The Honka log home kit was delivered to site in January 2022. The house was built using Honka FXL134 Zero Corner spruce logs; a modern, cross-laminated building component designed for use in contemporary properties. For Zoe, watching the structure go up was one of the most memorable moments of the project

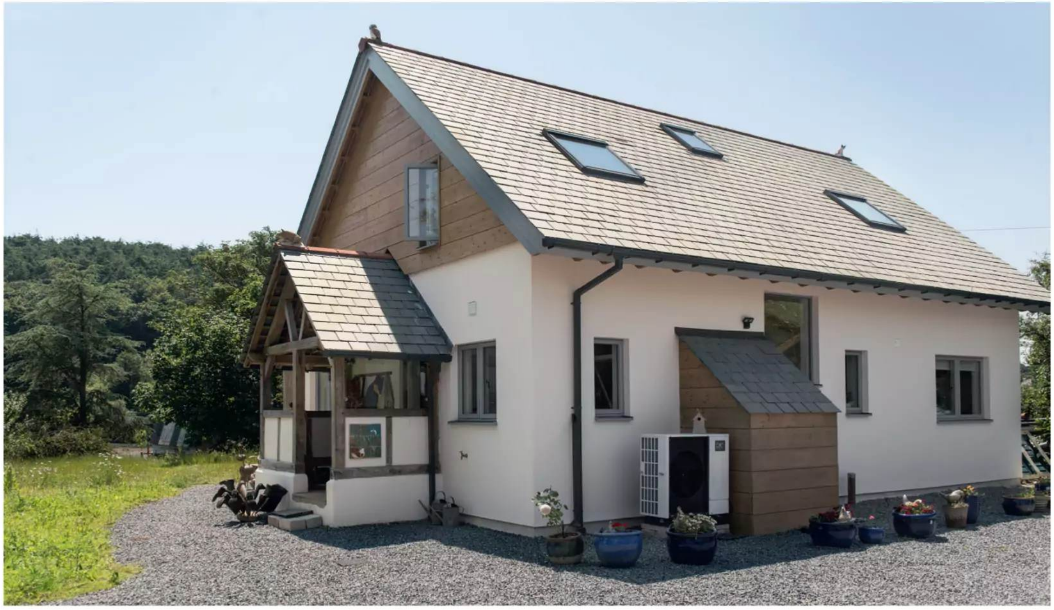
bungalow, but it had to be fairly open-plan downstairs," says Zoe. "Plus I wanted a veranda with rocking chairs, so that I could sit outside and enjoy the view of the river."

Zoe also prioritised sustainability throughout the design process. "I'd discovered that it was more expensive and less heat efficient to have peaked dormers over each window," she says. "So, my mum and I designed a shed dormer – but that was after I'd spent ages looking at Cape Cod houses to decide what size and angle looked attractive!"

Once satisfied with the drawings, Zoe reached out to a local architect to formalise the plans and support the build. While the architect was unable to take on the project, he recommended that they consider a Honka kit home. "He told me that if I wanted a project where I knew what the end cost was going to be, it was worth considering a package home. In the end, we opted for Honka – from day one they were very obliging. Luke Faulkner, the project design manager at Lodgico, the distributor for Honka in the UK, was very approachable and genuinely wanted to help us achieve the design we wanted."

To ensure they were making the right choice, Zoe and her partner, Andy, visited a Honka home in Minehead, Somerset. "That was an inspiration and made us feel confident in their timber

Right: The sleek Honka log construction blends modern design with natural materials. Timber cladding and cork render create a warm and eco-friendly facade. Thoughtfully lowered windows enhance scenic views of the surrounding gardens and beyond



FACT FILE

NAME Zoe Freeman
OCCUPATION GP & ceramicist
LOCATION Cornwall
TYPE OF BUILD Self build
STYLE Contemporary
CONSTRUCTION METHOD Engineered logs
PLOT SIZE 2,200m²
LAND COST Already owned
HOUSE SIZE 180m²
PROJECT COST £439,877
PROJECT COST PER M² £2,444
BUILDING WORK COMMENCED October 2022
BUILDING WORK TOOK 28 weeks

Above & right: Zoe had open-plan living on her wish list. This has been achieved, resulting in a spacious and inviting atmosphere

Right: The wood burner provides a cosy focal point for the living area and complements UFH on the ground floor

Below: The cream Shaker-style kitchen combines timeless charm with practical functionality, which matches the home's warm, natural aesthetic

system," says Zoe. Honka, a Finnish company founded by five brothers in 1958, is renowned for its expertise in industrial log home manufacturing. The company specialises in creating healthy living environments by using organic materials, maintaining exceptional indoor air quality, and delivering homes that offer a warm, stress-reducing atmosphere.

To secure formal planning permission, Zoe relied on CAD plans from Honka, and Luke recommended OCR Architecture to take on the Building Regulations plans. Once approval was granted, the focus shifted to site preparation, beginning with the demolition of the original bungalow. For Zoe, who had lived in the property for 23 years, it was a poignant moment. "My grandfather owned it before that, so it was sad in some ways," she says. "But at the same

time, I was fed up with talking about doing something to the house, so it was a relief to see things finally starting to move. So, overall, it was a day of mixed emotions."

Cabin life

With the bungalow reduced to rubble, Zoe, Andy and Danny moved into a temporary on-site cabin that would serve as home for the next eight months. Built by her father using recycled timber, the modest cabin featured a wood burner, a small bathroom, a tiny kitchen and a loft space for sleeping, accessed by a ladder.

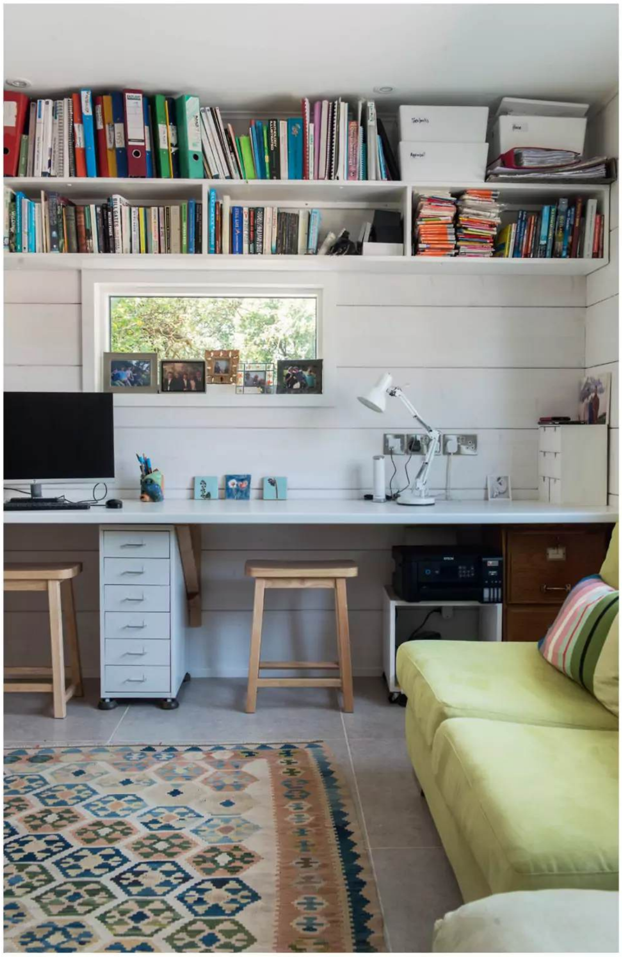
"It was sweet but basic. In the mornings, the temperature would drop as low as seven degrees," says Zoe. "The whole area was muddy because it was winter and wet, so every time we stepped outside, it was a case of grabbing our wellies. When I had to go off to work, I'd stomp through the mud to the car, change into my normal shoes, and then try to look professional when I reached the surgery. But I guess that's one of the delights of self building."

As well as the stress of the mud and living in cold conditions, challenges with the utilities added to the pressure. "After the bungalow was demolished, we still wanted electricity supplied to the cabin," says Zoe. "I didn't anticipate how much notice the company would need, but, hey, we got there in the end."

As Zoe took on the responsibility of organising the concrete slab for the kit home, the project became increasingly challenging. Balancing the role of project manager with her part-time work as a GP proved to be a strenuous task. "Once Lodgico arrived with the kit, they took over project management, but I was in control up to that point," says Zoe. "In hindsight, I underestimated how crucial the foundations and drainage were."

Modern efficiency

Once the groundwork was complete, life became less frenetic; before long the three-bedroom kit home arrived on site. The house



WE LEARNED...

GET THE BALL ROLLING as soon as possible, as many skilled and experienced architects often have long waiting lists. Plus, delays at the beginning of your project can push back your entire timeline. Starting early gives you more time to plan, refine your design, and address unexpected challenges.

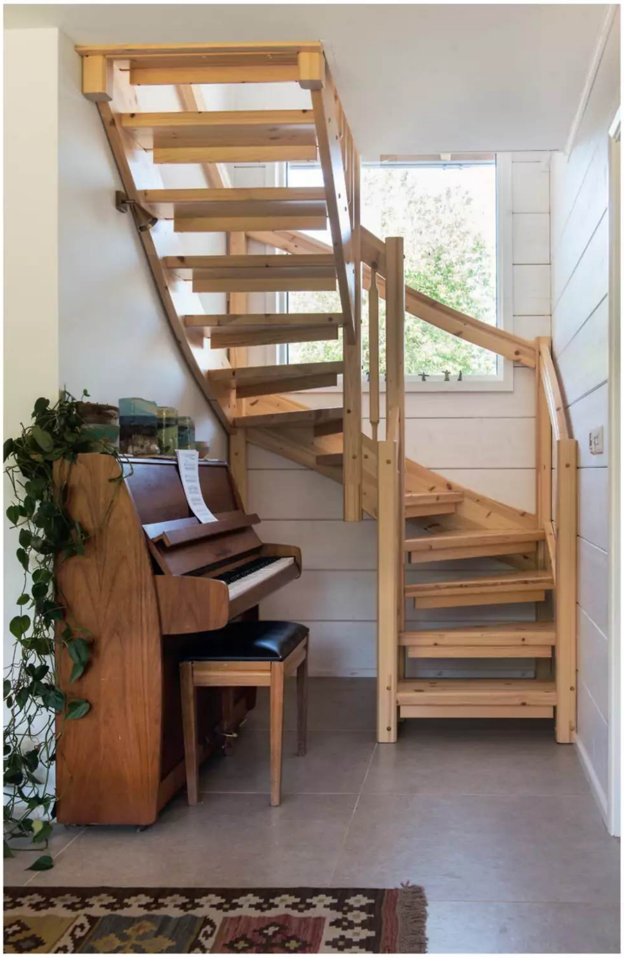
DO THE GROUNDWORKS IN SUMMER as wet weather caused delays and significantly increased our costs during this phase of the build. Working in the warmer months minimises the risk of weather-related complications. Plus, it can help you stick to your budget and schedule.

CONSIDER A FULL SOIL SURVEY as this upfront investment can end up saving you a lot of money and stress later. It allows you to secure competitive quotes for the foundations and gives a clearer picture of potential costs before work begins.

SEEKING TOO MUCH INPUT can lead to conflicting advice, causing you unnecessary confusion and second guessing. Trust your instincts and do your best stick to the vision that feels right for you and your future home.

was constructed using Honka FXL134 Zero Corner spruce log, a modern, non-settling, cross-laminated unit designed for contemporary homes. Its innovative design eliminates traditional corner overhangs, which offers a sleek, minimalistic appearance while ensuring structural stability. Steico ThermDry wood fibre insulation was fitted, and the exterior finished with a combination of cork render and timber cladding.

The kit arrived in January 2022, and within just two weeks, the house was wind and watertight. By early July, the turnkey build was complete. "Seeing the log frame go up so fast was so exciting," says



Above: The veranda offers a perfect spot to enjoy views of the Helford River

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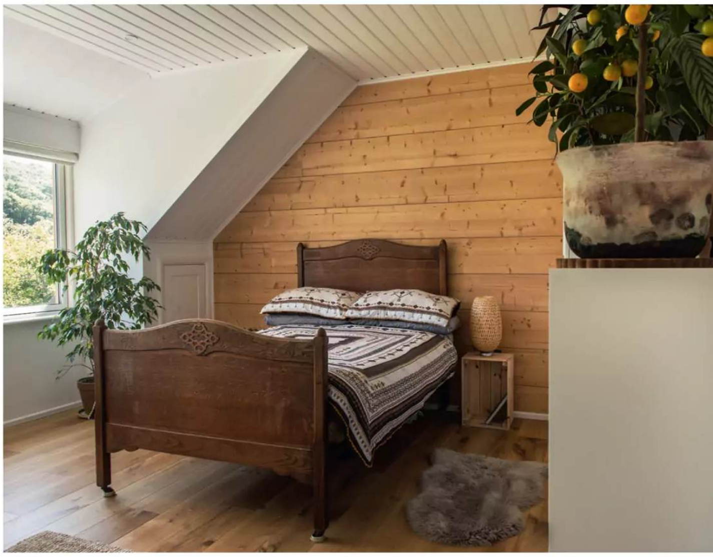


Above and right: The natural timber walls bring warmth and character to the home's interior, and highlight the house's sustainable construction

Zoe, who is thrilled with her new home, now positioned four metres further down the garden for an enhanced layout.

To maximise the stunning views of the Helford River, which is known for its scenic blend of woodland, secluded creeks, and semi-tropical gardens, the window sill heights throughout the house were lowered. Viking V21 aluclad double-glazed units were installed, ensuring both energy efficiency and picturesque sight lines.

In terms of heating, the home features underfloor heating (UFH) on the ground floor and radiators upstairs, all powered by an air source heat pump. Solar panels were also installed, reinforcing the home's eco-friendly credentials.

Among the features Zoe cherishes most is the long cloakroom with practical cupboards underneath, making it a functional and stylish addition. "The veranda is a big plus point, too. It's perfectly located so that on warm evenings, we can sit outside and look down towards the river," Zoe says. The veranda also doubles as a delightful space for serving cream teas during the ceramic classes Zoe runs from her pottery studio at the bottom of the garden.

Zoe is especially proud of her handcrafted touches. "I'm excited by how my exterior bird and vine ceramic tiles– which I'd like to make more of for commissions – have enhanced the look of the house, making it more bespoke," she says. "The ridge tiles I made have the owl and the pussycat theme and work well, too, because I wanted to add some quirky, artistic features to the property."

Reflecting on the finished project, Zoe feels the investment was worthwhile despite exceeding her original £350,000 budget. "It's been worth it because I've ended up with a vastly superior end-product, we've even created more parking space at the back of the house," she says. As for things she might have done differently, Zoe admits she would have liked the sitting room to be slightly larger, but it would have been too hard financially. "Overall, everyone loves the house, including my two grown-up sons, Charlie and Hamish, so I couldn't be happier!"

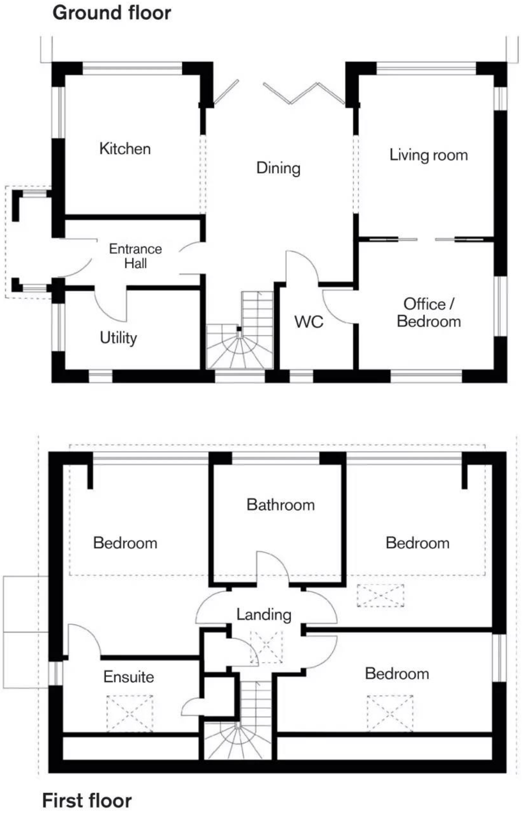
closer look

Unique finish...

Using ceramic tiles on exterior walls is an inspired way to transform your property's look while adding durability and character. The material is not only hardwearing and versatile, but is more affordable than porcelain, making it a fantastic option for those on a budget who don't want to compromise on quality. With an extensive range of patterns, colours and finishes to choose from, tiles of this type offer endless opportunities to create a unique and personal style for your home. For Zoe, a skilled ceramicist, this was a chance to bring her artistic flair to the project. "I created ceramics to add a personal touch. I'm pleased with how the vine and bird tiles between the windows, and the owl and the pussycat-themed ridge tiles have turned out," she says.

Decorative tiles

Floor plans



Ground floor

First floor

TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m²	Cost %	Total cost
Preliminaries	£56	2%	£10,106
Foundations & drainage	£226	9%	£40,772
Windows & doors	£103	4%	£18,516
Honka kit & labour	£1,067	44%	£192,085
Roof materials	£45	2%	£8,184
Internal wall materials	£37	2%	£6,639
Insulation	£103	4%	£18,540
Floor materials	£80	3%	£14,348
Joinery	£43	2%	£7,700
Kitchen	£96	4%	£17,250
Plumbing	£185	7%	£33,356
Heating (incl. solar panels, heat pump & battery)	£103	4%	£18,500
Electrics	£78	3%	£13,984
Decorating	£28	1%	£4,977
Fees	£66	3%	£11,850
Demolition	£68	3%	£12,325
Sewage treatment plant	£22	1%	£3,954
Other	£38	2%	£6,791
Grand total			**£439,877**

Note: The costs shown here reflect the original prices for materials, labour and services at the time this project was undertaken. As a general guide, inflation in the construction market runs at about 3%-4% per annum.

Useful contacts

BUILDING REGULATIONS **OCR Architecture** 01237 423965 www.ocrarchitecture.co.uk CERAMIC TILES ON EXTERIOR WALL **Zoe Freeman Ceramics** 07974 156948 www.zoefreemanceramics.co.uk FLOORING **Walls & Floors** 01536 314730 www.wallsandfloors.co.uk; **UK Flooring Direct** 02476 012840 www.ukflooringdirect.co.uk HONKA HOME DISTRIBUTOR **Lodgico** 01271 326343 www.lodgico.co.uk JOINERY **Notch Designs** 07728 404152 www.notchdesigns.co.uk KITCHEN SUPPLIER/FITTING **Howdens** 01872 223534 www.howdens.com KIT SUPPLIER **Honka UK** 01271 325516 www.honkafusion.co.uk LIGHTING **Pooky Lighting** 020 7351 3003 www.pooky.com STRUCTURAL ENGINEER **Ian Hick Consulting** 07940 385534 www.ianhickconsulting.co.uk WINDOWS **Viking Windows AS** www.viking.ee

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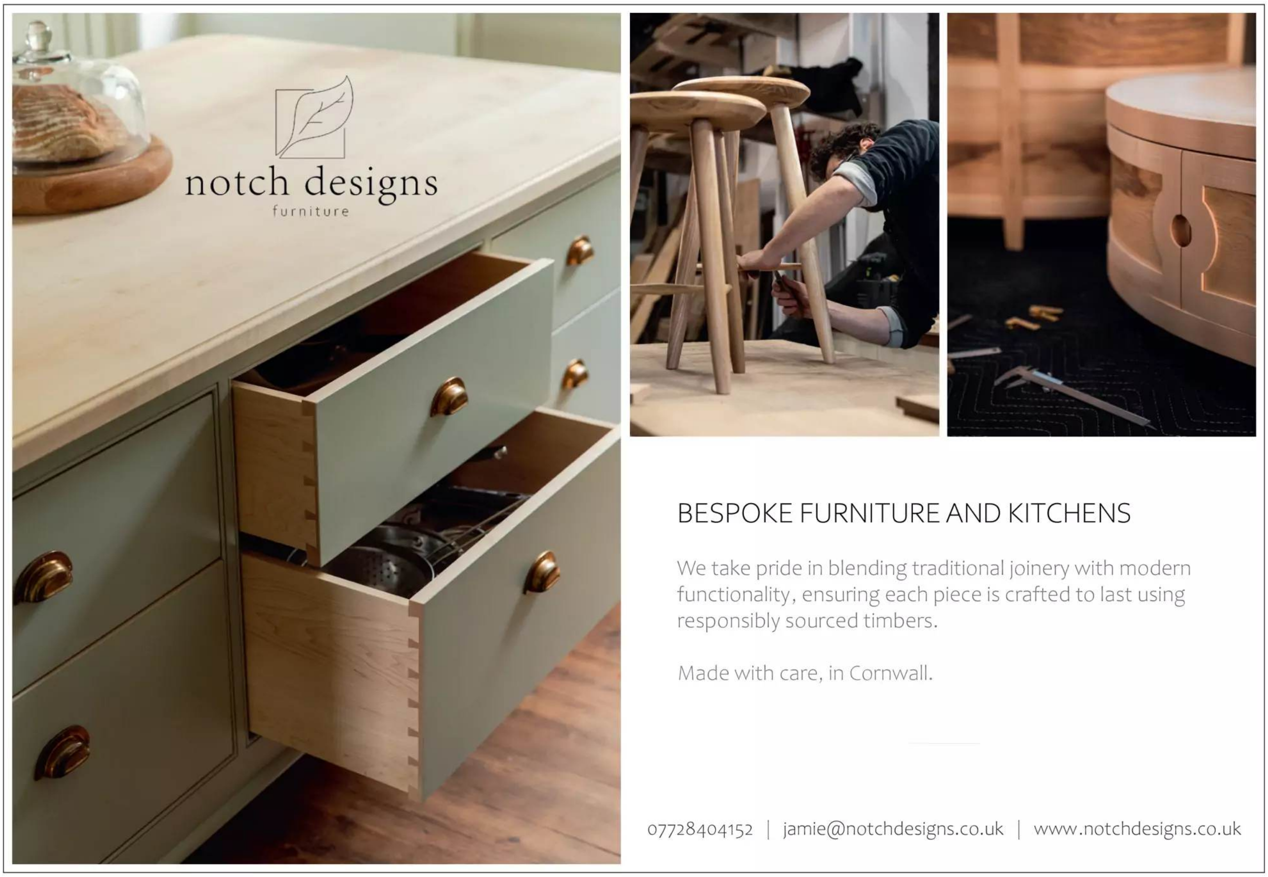

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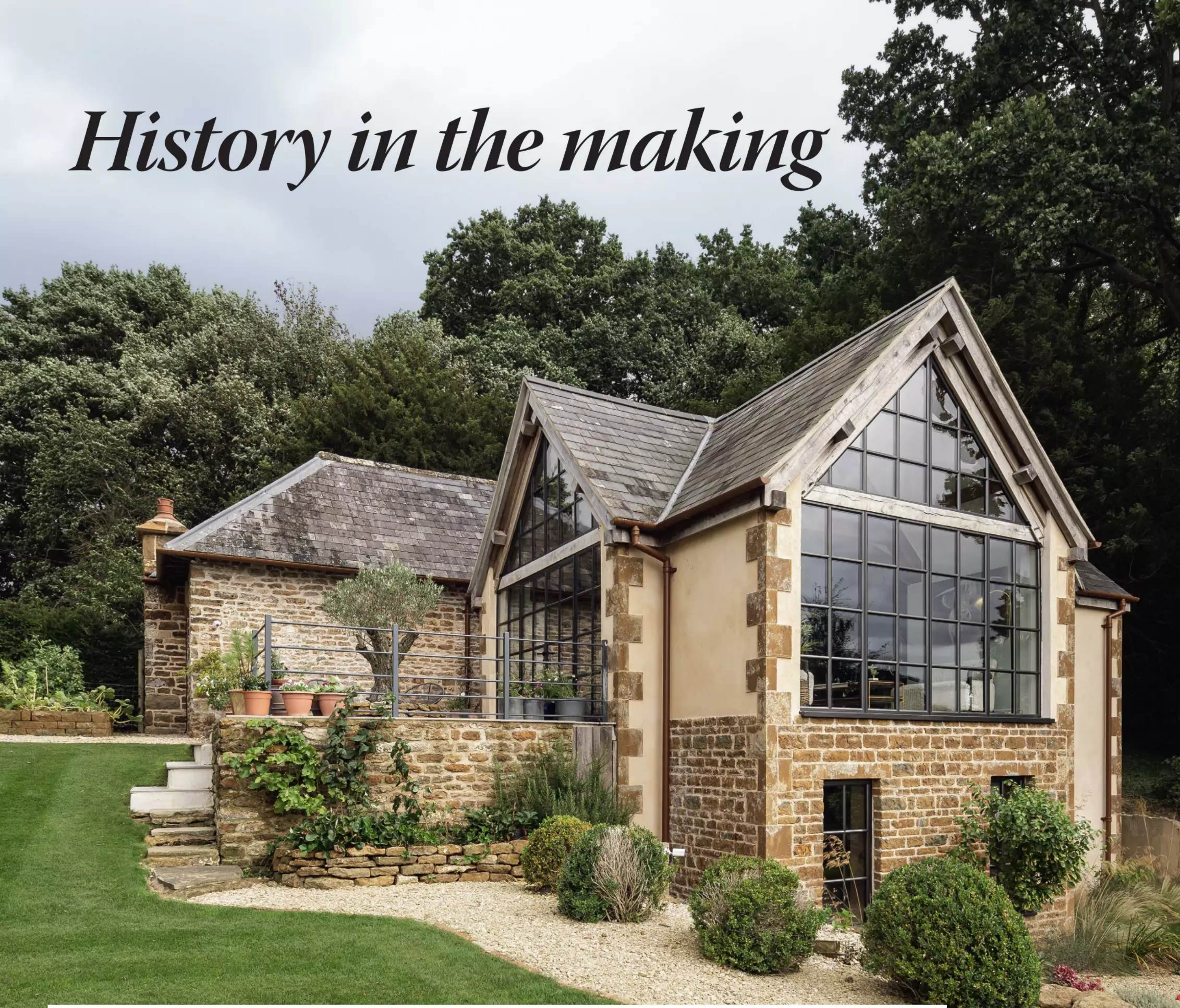
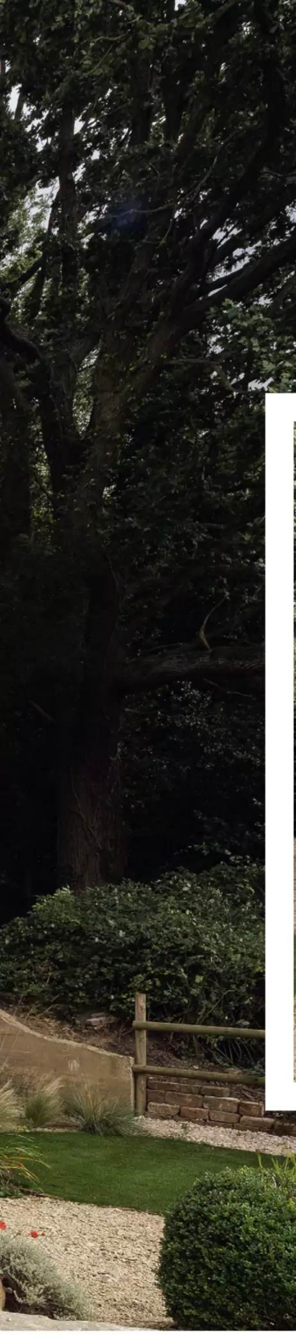
History in the making

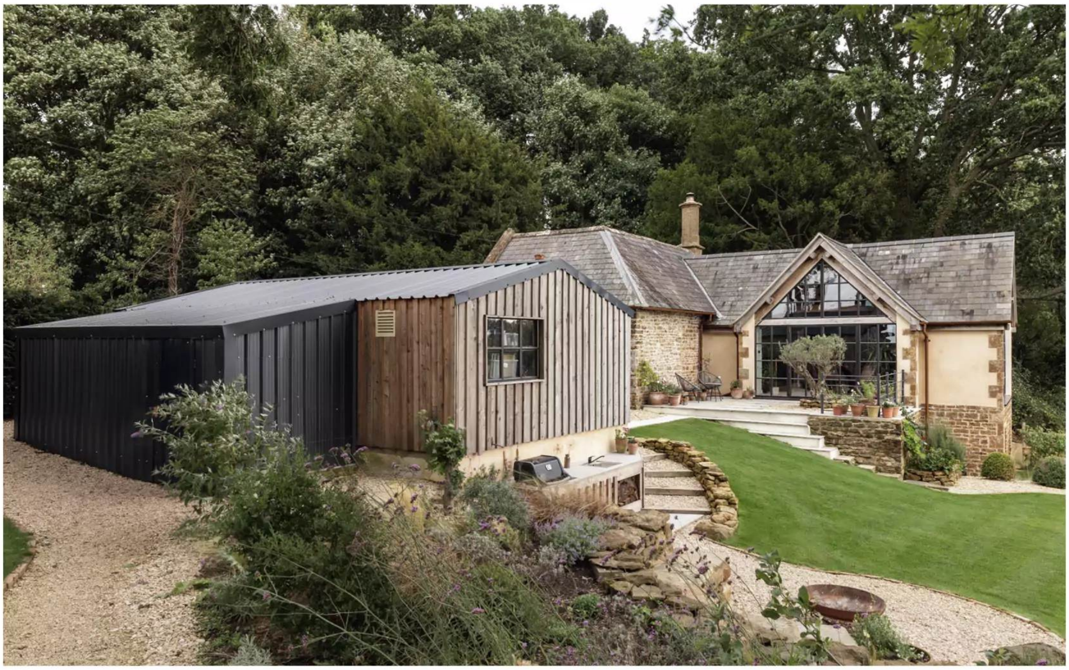


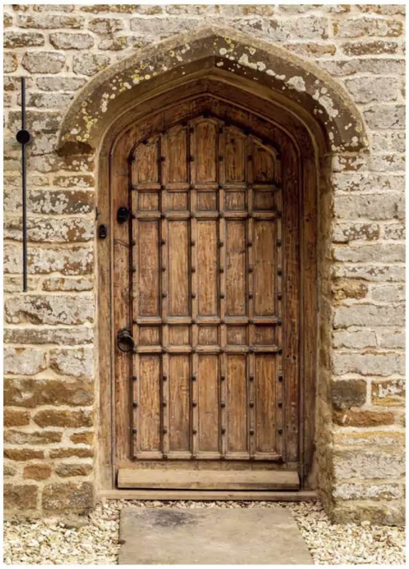
Left: From the front, the 19th-century lodge appears untouched. To bring it up to modern standards, Julian restored the original window frames, added secondary glazing and weather seals. The front door was also updated with a locking system to meet Building Regulations



After falling in love with a historic lodge, **Julian and Abigail Bernard** took a hands-on approach to transforming it into a gorgeous family home, on a tight budget

WORDS **JENNIFER GRIMBLE** PHOTOS **SIMON MAXWELL**





Julian and Abigail Bernard had no plans to live in Williamscot, Oxfordshire, until they stumbled upon a 19th-century gate keeper's lodge for sale, and couldn't resist what the charming property had to offer. The historic structure had originally been linked to the nearby, grade II listed, Williamscot House. With its pitched roof, delicate stonework, old-fashioned windows and decorative front door, the lodge had bags of heritage charm that immediately appealed to the couple. "We've always loved old buildings," says Abigail. "As soon as we viewed it, it felt like home,"

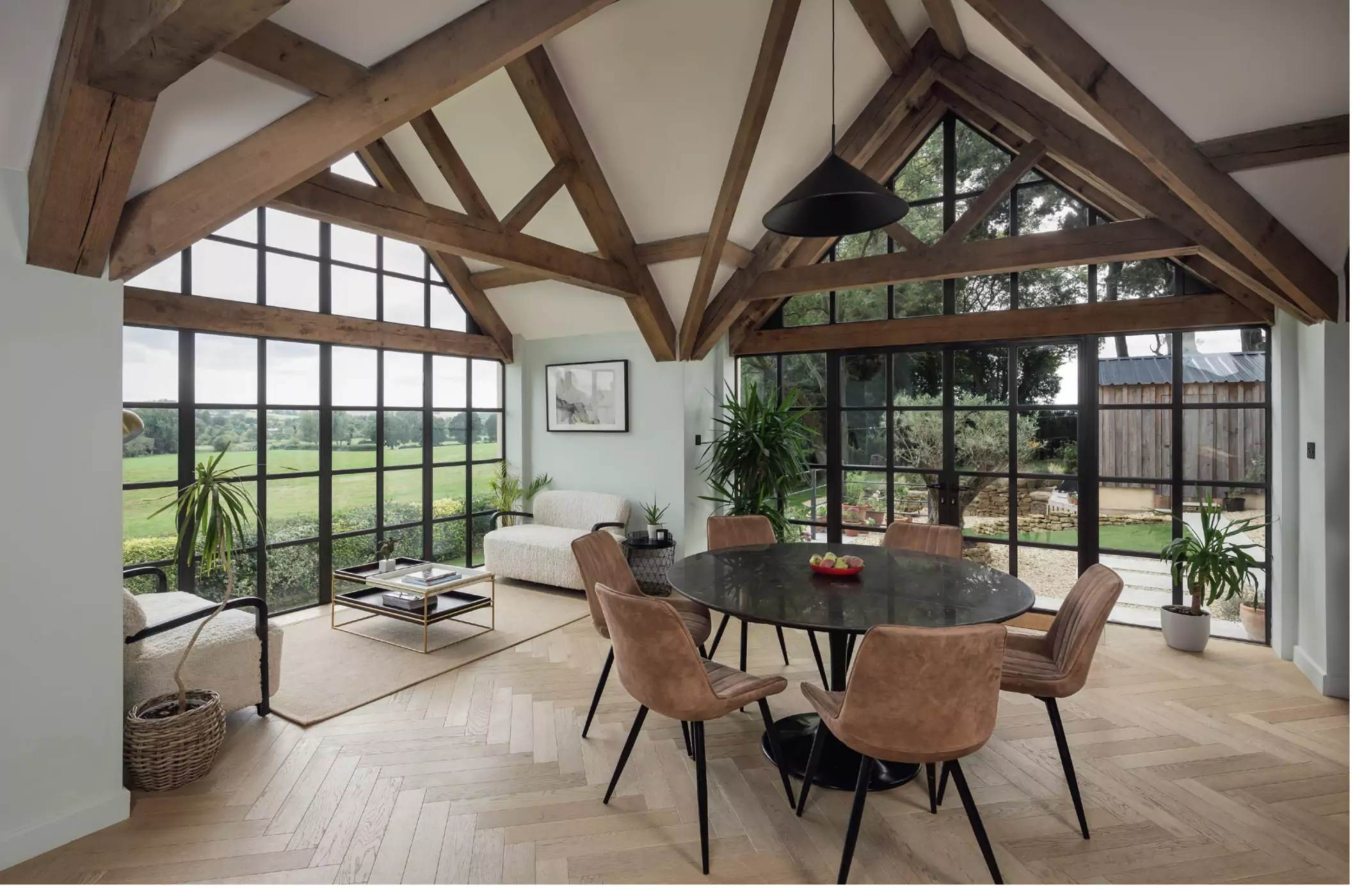
Over the years, the original structure had been extended several times, with boxy and unflattering additions. "It had sat vacant for a year. It was tired, with a dated bathroom and a substantial damp problem," says Julian. "We knew it was a big project, but it had large windows at the back that looked out onto a gorgeous view. That's what sold it to us. We thought, there must be something we can do to this house to make it work for us and our lifestyle."

The previous owner had spent 10 years attempting to obtain permission to modify the home, but was rejected each time. "We knew this going in, so we hired a planning consultant just before the purchase," says Julian. "We were advised to work with a conservation architect, so we contacted several and met with a few. We got such a good feeling from James Mackintosh. He came across keen and knowledgeable, and understood exactly what we were after."

Planning battle

Avid followers of self build and renovation magazines, as well as TV shows, the couple played around with designing their new home themselves using CAD software. "We originally envisioned a flat

Main & above: Finished with Hornton stone and lime render, the new extension looks like part of the original building. Two glazed gables by Met Therm Windows add a touch of modernity to the traditional addition



FACT FILE

NAMES Julian & Abigail Bernard

OCCUPATIONS Lead vehicle dynamics engineer & stay-at-home parent

LOCATION Oxfordshire

TYPE OF PROJECT Renovation & extension of historic lodge

PROJECT ROUTE Architect designed, homeowners projected managed & hired contractor

BOUGHT June 2018

PROPERTY COST £325,000

HOUSE SIZE 135m²

PROJECT COST £245,000

PROJECT COST PER M² £1,815

TOTAL COST £570,000

BUILDING WORK COMMENCED June 2020

BUILDING WORK TOOK 2.5 years

CURRENT VALUE £850,000

Right & below: The sitting room lies in the original lodge. An exposed stone wall, rustic ceiling beams and wood-burning stove reflect the home's historic character

roof extension at the back and didn't think we would have the budget to do something bigger," says Julian. "But when we saw James's design, we instantly fell in love with the concept he'd developed, and knew we had to find a way to make it happen."

Preserving the lodge's historic integrity was crucial. James suggested removing the modern extensions to expose more of the original structure at the rear, while ensuring the new addition remained hidden from view at the front. Using the site's topography to provide an extra lower ground floor, the built extension was inspired by the Arts & Crafts movement. "Elements of the lodge's design have been reflected in the add-on: the scale, the width, the

The home utilises a flipped floorplan, with the living areas on the second storey. The open-plan space benefits from a sitting area, a dining zone, a snug and a modern kitchen by MAS Kuchen

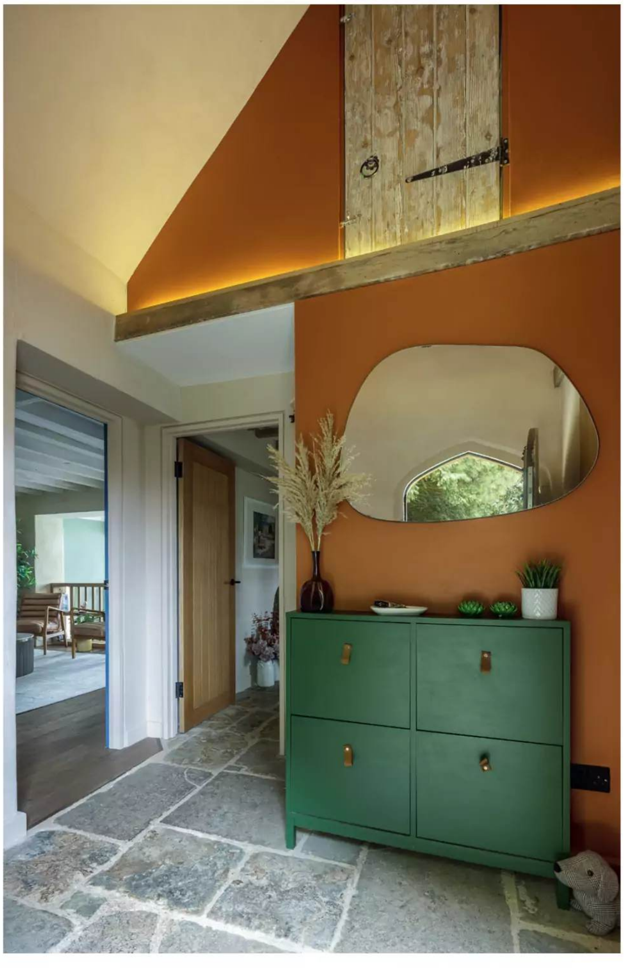
roof pitch and the existing floor to ceiling heights," says James. "Architectural details, such as the timber eaves, chimneys and a slate roof have been introduced to tie the old and new elements together."

To add a contemporary touch, James suggested the rear of the extension be finished with two large glazed gables, allowing for unobstructed landscape views. He also recommended a flipped floorplan, positioning the living spaces upstairs and the bedrooms on the new lower ground level, to make the most of the scenery.

Surprisingly, the initial planning application was rejected due to concerns that the pitched roof might be visible from a nearby footpath. "The planners were quite negative," says Julian. "We were happy to take direction from them regarding style and size, but they weren't interested in providing suggestions. It was just a flat no." Julian and Abigail spoke with residents in the village, including those on the parish council, to garner support, and all were positive about the scheme. James made some minor adjustments to the design, dropping the extension by one step and taking away some of the

chimneys. As a result, the scheme was approved. "Thanks to the backing of our neighbours, we managed to push the project through, but it took two years," says Abigail.

Above & right: Just like the build itself, the interiors perfectly harmonise old with new thanks to warm, rustic hues combined with contemporary timber details and gold accents



All hands on deck

Eager to take on the challenge, the couple chose to manage the project themselves and began searching for a contractor. "We contacted 12 or so builders who came recommended to us, but none really left an impression," says Julian. During a trip to pick up some second-hand fencing from a nearby property, Julian admired the quality of a renovated stone cottage on the site and managed to obtain the builders' contact details – Marty and Monty Corbett. The father and son team was invited to the lodge to discuss the project and see if they could be the ideal fit. "We got on well and quickly got a sense for their passion and attention to detail," says Abigail.

Work began on site in June 2020, with the removal of the former extension. "It was fairly stressful because the demolition works took place a week before the due date of our third daughter," says Abigail. "We were living in a caravan on site and were banking on being able to remortgage the house to free up funds, but when the lenders unexpectedly visited to inspect the house, half of it had already been knocked down." As a result, the couple learned that the property was not mortgageable, leaving them with only half their originally planned budget to complete the project.

To overcome this financial setback, they applied for a remortgage that was below the threshold for inspection. "No one came to view the property and we were able to obtain an extra £50,000," says Julian. "We could just about manage with that amount, but we realised we'd need to take on more jobs ourselves and try to source ex-display and second-hand items where possible."

Left & below: The textured lime plaster walls add individual character and visual interest to the scheme

WE LEARNED...

STAYING POSITIVE and celebrating every bit of progress, no matter how small, instead of feeling overwhelmed by the workload really helped us to keep focused and motivated.

EMBRACE THE SLOW PACE of a build. We took advantage of the whole process, allowing our design to evolve naturally as the spaces took shape. This gave us ample time to thoughtfully consider each decision.

A LIMITED BUDGET is a great opportunity. Working with a restricted figure encouraged us to step outside our comfort zones, learn new skills. We realised just how much we could accomplish with our own two hands.

In parallel with obtaining the additional financing, new beam and block foundations were laid, before the extension was constructed from blockwork and wrapped in Hornton stone. A further setback arose when the couple was burgled mid-project. "It was a frustrating time as it halted all progress on site until tools were replaced and paperwork sorted," says Julian.

Fortunately, a couple of weeks later, the couple were able to get things moving again. "We did everything," says Abigail. "We hand dressed stonework, meticulously installed and taped solid board cavity wall insulation, sorted the plumbing, electrics, sewage treatment plant, internal and external plastering – both traditional lime and modern gypsum," she says. "We basically spent two years with head torches on." Julian and Abigail also crafted the exposed oak trusses that decorate the main living space of the extension. "It's amazing what you can learn from YouTube!"

For the couple, creating their own beams was the highlight of the whole project. "Our finances forced us to get hands on and it was actually an amazing experience to form this feature ourselves," says Julian. "We spent minimal money on the sawn timber itself, in contrast to being quoted £50,000 for a professional to do the job, so we thought, why not give it a go?"

As for the most intimidating part of the process, Julian tackled the roof with occasional help from Martin. "Before I started, it felt very daunting. But once I was up there and got used to working at height, it was a case of taking it one step at a time and paying attention to key details, to ensure water could only travel in the intended direction," says Julian. "Martin continued to lend a hand at weekends throughout the project, so much so that we now consider him a good friend and regularly meet up."

Julian also focused his attention and got stuck-in on the original lodge: "I dug up the concrete floor, replacing it with an insulated limecrete slab with underfloor heating, as well as reinstating the original flagstones recovered during the groundworks."

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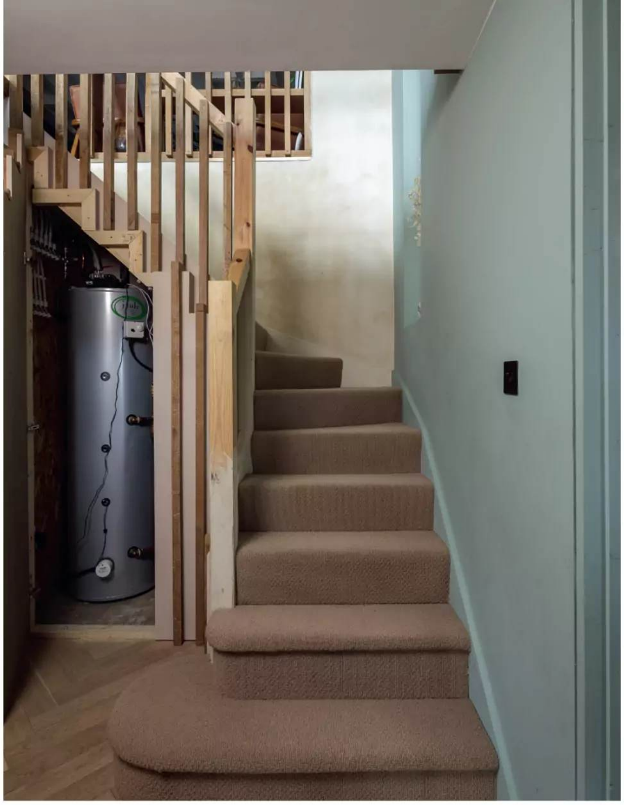


Left & below left: The couple finished their daughters' bathroom before any other space. Abigail found the design on Pinterest and Julian set about recreating it. The space features pretty pink tiles, a bath tub and a walk-in shower

After two and a half years of hard graft, Julian and Abigail's home was complete. From the front, the historic lodge appears untouched – aside from the fresh stonework and restored window frames. Yet move to the rear and an impressive, stone and render extension slowly reveals itself, finished with two impressive glazed gables that provide idyllic views and draw plenty of light into the home.

Characterful transformation

The original front door opens to the restored hallway, which flows through to a cosy sitting room, featuring the lodge's original stone walls and ceiling beams. This snug space unfolds into the new extension, where you'll find an open-plan kitchen and dining area, which opens up to an exterior terrace. An oak staircase leads down to the lower ground floor, where there are two bedrooms. Lime plaster walls painted in bold tones, exposed stonework, ceiling beams, hardwood and flagstone floors add to the characterful finish.

Despite the home's age, the couple has managed to make it remarkably energy efficient with some useful tech and upgrades to the building fabric. "We added secondary glazing to the original windows and introduced weather seals where necessary," says Julian. "We also utilised sheep's wool insulation in the lodge and wet plastered the walls in the extension to make the home as efficient as possible." The pair also installed an air source heat pump and MVHR system, to ensure the interior remains at the ideal temperature all year round. "We've gradually refined the settings on the heat pump, using data logged in the cloud," explains Julian. "This in turn has allowed us to reduce flow temperatures and achieve greater efficiency. In summer, part of the house gets a lot of sunlight, so the heating system transfers warmth from this side to the older part of property. We essentially use the stone walls as a solar battery."

Looking back on the project, both Julian and Abigail have fond memories, with Abigail stating it was definitely a once in a lifetime experience. "We had young children, so we did miss out on some quality family time during the work, but it was all worth it in the end," she says. "We get to share this beautiful home with our four kids." Julian on the other hand, isn't quite ready to pack away his tool kit. "It seems a shame to have acquired all these skills and only use them once," he says. So, let's watch this space…

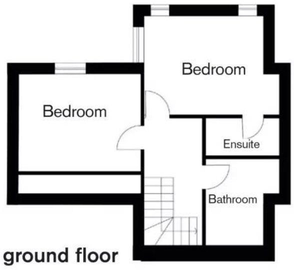
closer look

Sourcing stone...

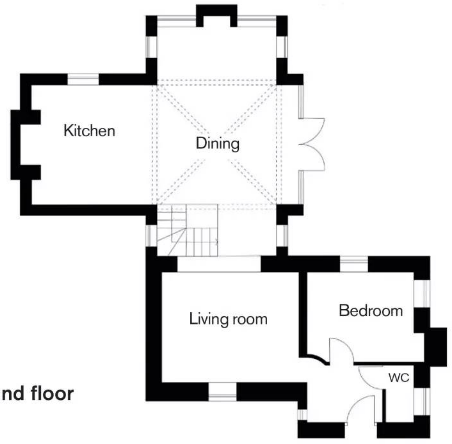
Abigail took on the challenge of sourcing stone for the extension that would seamlessly match the original lodge's finish. "I approached endless reclamation yards and quarries to find the right solution," she says. "We had so many samples in the end." Luckily, Abigail tracked down the perfect product – Hornton stone. This can be found throughout the Banbury area and boasts tawny brown colours, with green and greyish-blue tints. "Once we'd found the ideal fit, we hand worked every single piece to give it a unique tumbled finished," says Abigail. "We basically hit each one with the back of an axe, to make them less regular and more weathered. The exterior of the extension looks beautifully aged, just like the original lodge."

Charming exterior

Floor plans



Lower ground floor



Ground floor

TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m²	Cost %	Total cost
Architect & structural engineering	£74	4%	£10,000
Foundations	£185	10%	£25,000
External walls & windows	£541	30%	£73,000
Roof structure & covering	£200	11%	£27,000
Flooring	£67	4%	£9,000
Joinery & fittings	£44	3%	£6,000
Plumbing & heating (incl. bathroom & kitchen)	£237	13%	£32,000
Electrics	£59	3%	£8,000
Decorating	£185	10%	£25,000
Plastering & rendering	£74	4%	£10,000
External works	£148	8%	£20,000
Grand total			**£245,000**

Note: The costs shown here reflect the original prices for materials, labour and services at the time this project was undertaken. As a general guide, inflation in the construction market runs at about 3%-4% per annum.

Useful contacts

DESIGN ARCHITECT **James Mackintosh Architects** 01865 950 730 www.jamesmackintosharchitects.com BUILDING CONTROL ARCHITECT **ArchTech43** 07941196892 3D MODELLING & VISUALISATION ARCHITECT **Daniel Bernard** 07729 915187 STRUCTURAL ENGINEER **John R Hansford Structural Consulting Engineer** 01295 255396 BUILDER & STONE MASONRY **Martin & Monty Corbett** 07891866826 GROUNDSMAN **Gordon Phipps** 07809 897881 TIMBER FRAME CONSULTANT **Nick Cotterell Timber Frame Repair and Conservation** nickcotterell3@gmail.com KITCHEN **MAS Kuchen** 01189 432 100 www.maskuchen.co.uk WORKTOPS & TIMBER FLOORING **Wood N Beyond** 020 8038 8776 www.woodandbeyond.com STONE FLOORING **Mandarin Stone** 01600 715444 www.mandarinstone.com HEATING **Secon Solar** 0191 516 6554 www.seconrenewables.com WINDOWS **Met Therm Windows** 01730 894745 www.metthermwindows.co.uk BATHROOM **Lusso Stone** 020 3318 1182 www.lussostone.com **Ca' Pietra** 01380 735886 www.capietra.com; **Bathroom Mountain** 01782 405047 www.bathroommountain.co.uk LIGHTING **Vaunt Design** 01158 501934 www.vauntdesign.com **Lighting Direct** 0345 646 1137 www.lighting-direct.co.uk

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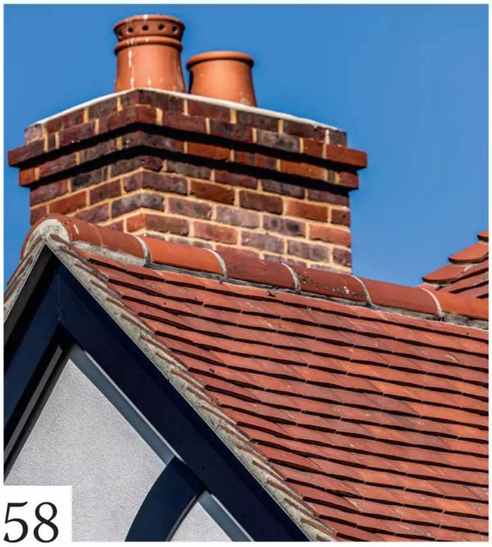
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MASTERING ROOF DESIGN

Mark Stevenson sets out the diverse range of roof designs and materials for your home build. His insights will help you choose the perfect option for your next project

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WHO CAN DESIGN MY SELF BUILD?

From chartered architects to in-house designers, Erika Chaffey explores the main options for developing the design of your dream home

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BATHROOM RENOVATION COSTS

From plumbing and electrics to installation and labour, Kate Sandhu guides you through what you can expect to pay for a range of bathroom features

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NIKHILESH HAVEL

Mastering roof design

Looking to create a stylish, functional and energy-efficient roof for your home building project? **Mark Stevenson** discusses materials, design options and installation techniques

Above: This new home by Welsh Oak Frame (welshoakframe.com) features a traditional look from the front, including slate roof tiles across the roof, pitched dormers and porch

When designing your new home, the roof might not come to mind as the most exciting feature, but it plays a crucial role in shaping the finished house's character, functionality and energy efficiency. Beyond providing protection against the elements, the roof defines your home's architectural style, impacts interior space and significantly influences sustainability and thermal performance. So, choosing the right design and construction method is essential.

In the UK, roofs must contend with diverse weather, from heavy rain to frosty winters. It's vital to balance practical needs – like weatherproofing, insulation and ventilation – with your style and budget. Planning rules may also influence your choices, especially for homes located in conservation areas.

This guide covers the key considerations for pitched and flat roofs, offering insights into materials, methods and design ideas to help you create the perfect roof for your self build or renovation project.

PITCHED ROOFS

Pitched roofs have been a cornerstone of British housing for centuries. Their sloping design allows efficient water runoff, making them well-suited to the UK's rainy climate. They're also aesthetically versatile, ranging from simple gable roofs to more complex hip-and-valley or mansard configurations, suiting various architectural preferences.

Modern designs typically comprise a timber truss framework that supports the roof covering, creating a durable and weatherproof barrier. The basic components include timber rafters, joists and supports, a breathable underlay (membrane), battens and the roof covering itself, which might be tiles, slate or metal.

The main appeal of a standard trussed roof lies in its affordability and quick assembly. Prefabricated trusses are widely available and cost-effective for straightforward designs. However, their design – particularly standard fink trusses with their webbed structure – can limit internal roof space, often making loft areas unusable.

Alternatives to standard pitched roofs

For those seeking additional functionality or flair, there are several options beyond the standard trussed roof:

Attic trusses: These are a practical solution for creating usable loft spaces. They're designed with open central voids, enabling the addition of habitable rooms for a relatively minor cost uplift. This is a popular choice for self builders anticipating future expansions or those that want to maximise their home's usable floor area.

Left: Dreadnought (dreadnought-tiles.co.uk) machine-made red sanded clay tiles wrap over the roof and walls of this sleek extension by James Alder Architects

Below: Flat roofs are a common feature of modern self build homes; this example is a high-quality IKO polymeric single-ply membrane system, installed by County Flat Roofing (countyflatroofing.co.uk)

Structural insulated panels (SIPs): A great option for modern, energy-efficient homes, where vaulted spaces are a design feature. SIPs combine structural support with high levels of insulation and airtightness, allowing for cathedral ceilings, open plans and habitable lofts. While they can be more expensive upfront, they reduce heating costs and provide superior thermal performance.

Hand cut roofs: The option offers maximum flexibility for intricate roof designs, such as those with varying pitches or dormer windows. Unlike prefabricated trusses, a hand cut roof is built on site using traditional carpentry techniques. This method takes longer to build, requires skilled labour and is generally more expensive.

Insulating a pitched roof

When it comes to creating a comfortable and energy-efficient home, how you insulate the roof is critical. Pitched designs must be insulated properly to support thermal performance and the durability of the roof structure. There are two primary methods: cold roof and warm roof construction. The key difference between the two lies in where the insulation is placed. Both methods have pros and cons – your choice will depend on the design and how the space underneath will be used.

Cold roof construction: Insulation is placed at ceiling level, leaving the roof void (loft) above cold. While this is the traditional method, due to its low cost, lofts are not habitable and require adequate ventilation to prevent condensation. To meet modern Building Regs, cold roofs are insulated with quilt insulation laid between and over the ceiling joists to a depth of about 400mm, leaving the rafters that support the roof covering exposed to outside

WHY VENTILATION MATTERS

Good ventilation is crucial for both warm and cold roof constructions. Without proper airflow, warm, moist air from your home can rise into the cold roof space and condense on cold surfaces. In turn, this can lead to damp, mould and even rot, causing structural damage.

Warm roofs are less sensitive because – as it says on the tin – the insulation layer keeps the roof structure warm, which reduces the risk of condensation. However, they still require adequate ventilation between the roof coving and insulation, as well as a vapour control layer to stop moisture from the building entering the structure.

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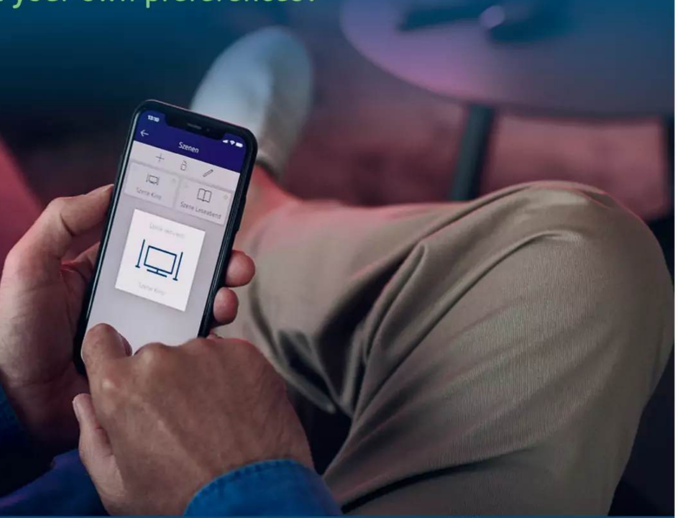


Contact a LUXORliving specialist to arrange a free consultation. www.luxorliving.co.uk

Left: This stunning self build by Kast Architects (www.kastarchitects.com) features a cantilevered first floor volume with overhanging flat roof, providing an element of solar shading for the living space below

temperatures. Care must be taken to make sure the bulky insulation does not block ventilation paths at the eaves.

Warm roof construction: Insulation is installed in at rafter level, ensuring the entire roof structure remains warm. This method is ideal for homes with habitable lofts or vaulted ceilings, as it creates a continuous thermal envelope. Although more expensive, warm roofs unlock liveable spaces and offer better energy efficiency.

Warm roofs typically use rigid insulation boards (such as PIR or phenolic foam) installed above or between the rafters (or embedded into the structure, in the case of SIPs). Sometimes, an additional layer is added below the rafters, to reduce thermal bridging. A vapour control layer (VCL) is placed on the warm side of the insulation to prevent moisture from penetrating the roof structure.

Effective airtightness is just as crucial as insulation for making spaces like loft rooms or vaulted ceilings comfortable and livable. This prevents draughts that might allow warm air to leak out or cold air to enter the building, thus keeping your energy bills in check. The key component is the vapour control layer, which also acts as an airtightness barrier. In addition, breathable membranes must be installed above the insulation on warm roofs, to allow moisture that would otherwise be trapped in the roof structure to escape, while keeping water out.

Pitched covering options

Choosing the right roof finishing material goes beyond aesthetics; it impacts durability, cost, and overall performance. The material must suit your roof's pitch, the local architectural style and Building Regulations. Factors such as budget, planning constraints and personal taste will guide your decision. Common options include:

Clay tiles: Traditional and highly durable, they last up to 100 years. Their warm tones suit period homes and new builds alike, though they are pricier than concrete, especially handmade varieties. Plain clay tiles need a minimum pitch of 30°, while interlocking options can go as low as 17.5°.

Concrete tiles: A budget-friendly alternative to clay with a lifespan of 50+ years. Available in a wide variety of styles and colours, including designs that imitate clay and slate. However, they don't weather as well and are prone to fading over time.

Natural slate: Premium and long-lasting (100+ years), offering a distinctive texture and colour, with a low-maintenance finish. The downside is it's fairly expensive, even when imported, and requires skilled installation.

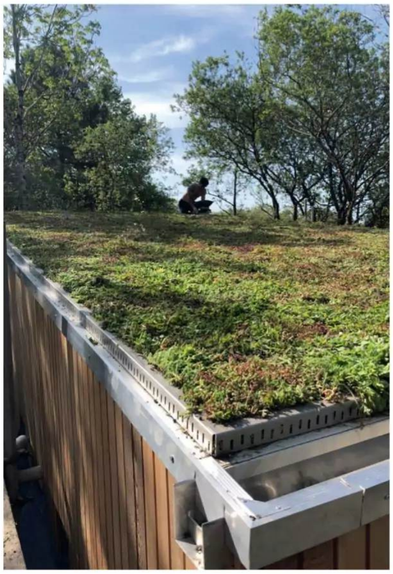
Synthetic slate: A manmade product designed to mimic slate at a fraction of the cost and weight. It's less authentic and less durable, however, with an expected life of around 30-50 years.

Metal roofing (zinc, copper, steel): Lightweight, sleek, and long-lasting (50+ years). Often made from recycled materials but costly and potentially noisy in rain if not soundproofed. Skilled installers are essential.

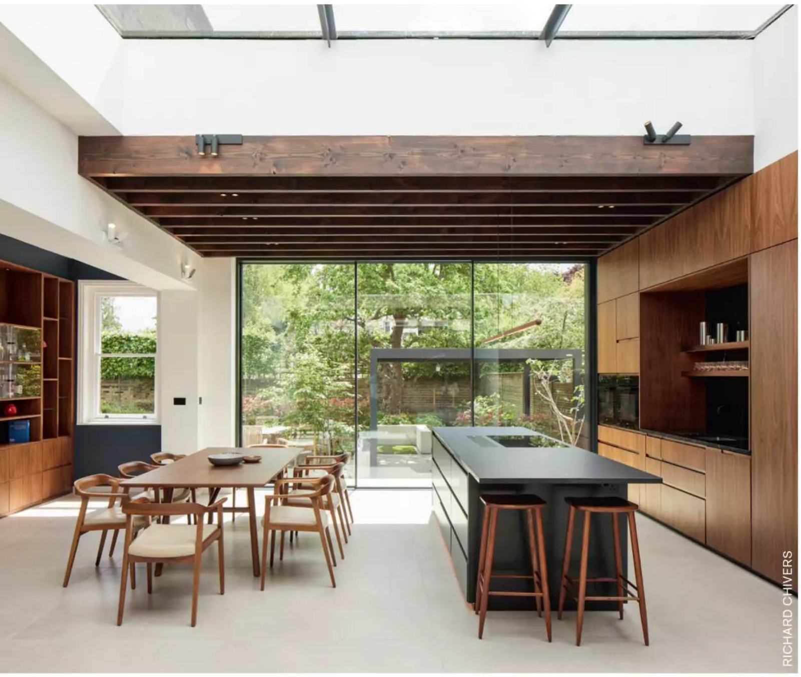
FLAT ROOFS

Popular in modern architecture, the latest generation of flat roofs are far removed from older iterations notorious for maintenance issues. The clean lines and versatility of today's solutions make them ideal for rooftop terraces, green roofs or simply as a striking design statement.

Despite their name, these structures aren't completely flat. Instead, they're built with a slight slope to ensure



Above: Green roofs can contribute positively to biodiversity and help to preserve natural views from upper storey windows or neighbouring properties


RICHARD CHIVERS

Above: CDC Studio (www.cdcstudio.co.uk) designed this striking flat-roof extension, which incorporates a large rooflight

Right: Available from Roofing Superstore (roofingsuperstore.co.uk), these Marley Concrete Red roof tiles create a classic finish, ideal for period homes or heritage-style new builds

proper drainage. A standard flat roof includes a structural base (typically timber), a VCL to block moisture, insulation and a waterproof membrane. Installation methods depend on the substrate. Mechanically fastened systems are generally used for timber decks and fully bonded solutions for insulation slabs. However, it's best to seek the advice of a specialist installer before getting started.

Condensation is a key challenge in flat roof design and proper detailing is essential to manage this. The warm roof method, with insulation above the structural deck, is most common. This reduces condensation risk, improves energy efficiency, and prevents thermal bridging. Paying attention to the roof's vapour control layers and ventilation is essential to keep condensation in check.

MARK STEVENSON

Mark Stevenson has worked as a construction professional for over 35 years and is a serial self builder. He runs project management consultancy Elsworth Projects and, as chair of NaCSBA, advocates for the interests of self builders and contributes to the success of the emerging custom build industry.

WOW-FACTOR IDEAS

A well-designed roof can transform your new home. Consider features such as vaulted ceilings, exposed trusses or rooflights for visual impact. Large rooflights can flood interiors with natural light, while dual-pitch designs add architectural interest. For a unique touch, consider cantilevered rooflines, or green roofs, which not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of your home but also add value and sustainability credentials.

Vaulted ceilings: Create dramatic, open interiors with exposed beams or structural elements.

Rooflights: Flood spaces with natural light enabling deeper rooms to be created without a loss of light.

Green roofs: Provide a natural touch, which improves insulation and sustainability characteristics.

Feature trusses: Expose intricate timber trusses or feature beams to create a characterful aesthetic.

Dual pitches: Combine multiple roof pitches for a dynamic architectural style.

Hidden gutters: Create clean lines with concealed drainage systems. These work particularly well if you're opting for a metal roof covering.

Cantilevered roofs: Extend rooflines beyond walls for a bold, contemporary look.

Loft balconies: Turn attic spaces into functional living areas with amazing views by integrating balconies or walk-on terraces.

Modern flat roof coverings

With advancements in technology, today's flat roof coverings offer improved performance and aesthetics, providing the durability and design flexibility self builders want. Here's an overview of the key materials to consider:

Single-ply membranes (EPDM, TPO): Lightweight, flexible, and weather-resistant, these membranes are easy to install and repair. EPDM, a synthetic rubber-based membrane, is a well-known and budget-friendly example. TPO is a high-quality alternative that requires experienced installers, hence it's more expensive, but is particularly durable and comes with 15- to 20-year guarantees.

Fibreglass (GRP): Known for its seamless, durable finish, fibreglass provides excellent water resistance, with 20-year warranties commonplace. Can crack under stress or impact if poorly installed.

Bitumen felt: A budget-friendly choice for flat roofs. While affordable, it lacks the durability and visual appeal of newer materials. Cold-applied versions are now available, eliminating the safety risk of hot works.

Green roofs: These planted roof systems are designed to help a new build or extension blend into its setting. Green roofs offer ecological and thermal benefits, but require robust structural support and ongoing upkeep.

Traditional flat roof coverings, like felt and asphalt, are cheap but tend to fail after 10–12 years, especially in extreme weather. In contrast, products like single-ply membranes are long-lasting and come with insurance-backed guarantees. When choosing a membrane, always opt for materials that have been independently assessed, such as BBA-certified systems.

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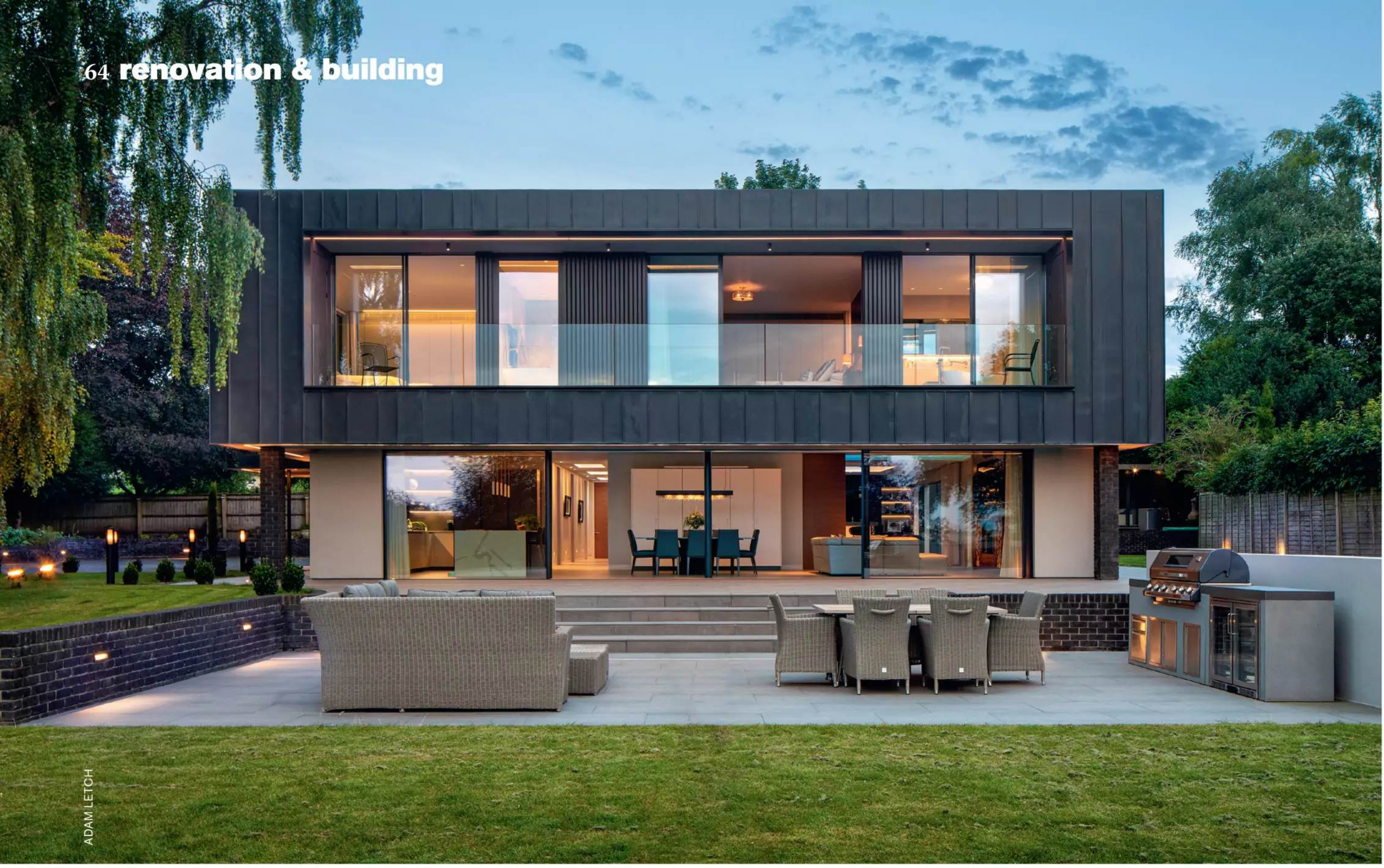

ADAM LETCH

Above: This stunning five-bedroom home was initially conceived as a refurbishment of a single-storey 1970s property. The homeowners quickly realised that a knock-down and rebuild project would be the best way to maximise the plot and create the layout they were after. 3s Architects (www. 3s-ad.com) developed the impressive design, which features a u-shaped ground floor, open-plan living space, cantilevered staircase and a statement copper box to house the master bedroom and guest wing

WHO CAN DESIGN MY SELF BUILD?

Whatever your project goals, electing the right team or individual to translate your vision into a reality is a key ingredient for success. Erika Chaffey explores three routes to creating your dream home

CHARTERED ARCHITECT

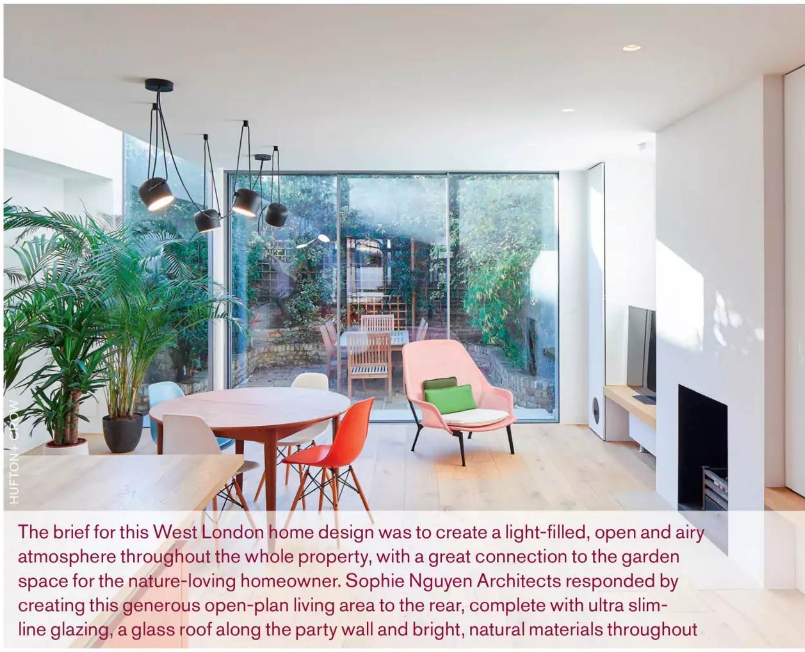
Architects are extensively trained, highly-skilled professionals who can transform your idea of the ideal home, into a detailed and achievable scheme. They provide expert guidance throughout the design, planning and construction process. A chartered architect is an experienced expert who has been accredited by a recognised professional body, such as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

The right designer will combine creativity, technical skill, and a deep understanding of space in order to develop a bespoke scheme. “Designing a home is like solving a puzzle,” says Sophie Nguyen, director and founder of RIBA chartered practice Sophie Nguyen Architects. “We take into account your aspirations, site constraints, any planning limitations, the budget and key details such as sunlight and views – putting each piece together to develop a design that’s expertly tailored to your preferences and your location.”

Architects can transform challenges into opportunities, maximising the potential of your plot and budget through creative approaches you may not have initially envisioned for your home. For instance, if your site is sloping, in a conservation area, or presents other complexities, your designer can propose innovative solutions. “I’m interested in creating and revealing new spaces that no one has considered, to create unique and surprising buildings,” says Sophie. “I like to discuss with my clients what I call the Sunday afternoon test. A lot of areas can look beautiful under sun and blue sky. However, the real test of a space is, when it’s grey outside and it’s Monday tomorrow, do you feel happy where you are?” Great design not only prioritises the right structure for your home, but focuses on creating comfortable and enjoyable living spaces that support your day-to-day lifestyle.

Choosing the right architect for you is vital. Look for someone who understands and shares your vision. “Check that your values align,” advises Sophie. “For example, are you after a distinctly traditional or modern build, or something in between? Are eco-friendly principles a priority?" Meeting with potential designers, talking through your ideas and viewing their previous work can help you find someone you trust.

A reasonable allowance for an architect's services and other consultants, such as a party wall surveyor, structural engineer and quantity surveyor, would be between 20% to 25% of your overall project costs, with fees often paid per stage. When engaging the expertise of any designer, you should consider this as part of your overall project budget and as an investment in the quality and longevity of your build. "A good architect makes the difference between creating a standard house and a bespoke home you'll enjoy for years to come," says Sophie.


HUFTON + CROW

The brief for this West London home design was to create a light-filled, open and airy atmosphere throughout the whole property, with a great connection to the garden space for the nature-loving homeowner. Sophie Nguyen Architects responded by creating this generous open-plan living area to the rear, complete with ultra slim-line glazing, a glass roof along the party wall and bright, natural materials throughout

ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIST

Architectural technologists combine a scientific approach with a practical mindset to deliver homes that balance great design with functionality and performance. While architects often emphasise light, space, and creative concepts – technologists typically focus on the practical elements of constructing a home. "We deliver the science behind the design and ensure it can be built effectively," explains Tom Gray, chartered architectural technologist at Robert Shreeve Associates. "We often take a project from the initial plans through to construction on site, handling the technical side of making the vision a reality."

You can engage an architectural technologist to design and deliver your entire project, or you may opt for an architect to develop your initial concept, before engaging a technologist to take this forward to completion. Some designers are accredited under the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT), offering guidance to professionals and quality assurance to clients.

This construction-minded approach emphasises modern building systems, sustainability and affordability. "Technologists have design flair but are grounded in practical knowledge of the latest technologies and building methods," says Tom. For self builders, this means a home that is not only beautiful and unique, but also functional and efficient.

The process closely mirrors that of an architect, who will follow the RIBA framework from initial meetings and concept development, through to gaining planning permission, the detailed design, tendering and on site construction. "It's a collaborative relationship," says Tom. "We work with clients to understand how they live, to ensure the design fits their vision, budget, and site." You can expect to pay in the same region as you would for an architect, as part of your overall professional design fees.

Left: A finialist in the CIAT's Architectural Technology awards, this eye-catching home replaced an outdated bungalow. The new design by PiP Architecture is a highly-sustainable property with a much larger internal floor area, built within the previous footprint. Cleverly slotting in with its surroundings, from the road, the two-storey dwelling has the appearance of a bungalow as the ground floor is submerged into the gently sloping site

HOW HANDS-ON CAN I BE IN THE DESIGN PROCESS?

Designing your own home can be an exciting way to create something that's uniquely yours, but it's not without its challenges. Here's what to consider if you're thinking about taking more of a DIY approach to your scheme:

Professional input is essential: While designing your build yourself might save you some money, experts bring invaluable expertise that will likely enable you to get more out of your budget. "A well-designed architectural plan will also provide the clarity and detail necessary for a successful planning application," says Helen Needham. Thoughtful layouts, perspectives, and adherence to regulations can both help to streamline the approval process and ensure an effective and affordable design that takes into account space, light, energy efficiency and structural integrity.

Understand the risks: Submitting a planning application on your own can be tricky. "Many DIY attempts fail because of missing or incorrect information," explains Tom Gray. Without experience or the right technical skills and knowledge, your application could face rejection, adding to your project timeline and costs.

JOHN MAHER

Keep the design simple: Self-designed homes benefit from straightforward layouts that are easier to construct. L-shaped or rectangular plans work well for maximising space and budget while maintaining great aesthetic appeal and visual interest.

Do your homework: Researching regulations, construction techniques and energy-efficient design solutions is essential. "Consult reliable resources like the CIAT or RIBA websites for guidance on finding a suitably qualified individual to assist you with the process," says Tom.

Above: Build It reader John Mitchell designed his own L-shaped coastal home with vaulted ceilings, utilising his practical skills as a gas engineer and engaging a professional designer to put together the technical drawings and submit the planning application

MARK WATTS

Above: The Oakwrights design team conceptualised this contemporary oak frame home in Somerset. The homeowners had a clear wish list and after multiple meetings, the designers developed a bespoke scheme, balancing their goals with the unique site

IN-HOUSE DESIGNER

Many package home companies offer in-house design services, providing a tailor-made solution and a streamlined, cost-conscious approach to creating your dream self build. "Our team of specialists guide clients through each stage of the process, from initial consultations and site visits through to achieving planning permission," explains Helen Needham, head of architecture at Oakwrights. "You'll work closely with our architectural designers at each and every step to develop a bespoke package." Opting for this design route can offer added cost and scheduling certainty, alongside excellent levels of customisation, taking some of the stress out of self building.

Another key benefit is flexibility. While your chosen supplier's catalogue designs can provide a great starting point for your scheme, they are rarely replicated. "Clients can choose a completely bespoke design or adapt an existing style, adjusting layouts, rooflines, or window placements to reflect their unique vision and budget," says Helen.

With an in-house team, you can benefit from seamless integration between design and build. Many providers offer a range of services and products to deliver your completed home with an all-in-one turnkey package. Or, you can specify the main superstructure, and your supplier can offer advice on the right contractor or follow-on trades to finish your home to your chosen specifications.

Service costs will depend on the complexity of your project. "On average, our design contracts are between £4,000-£8,000, plus VAT for small to medium homes and can go over £10,000, plus VAT for larger and more complicated designs," says Helen. "Our in-house team is trained to deliver your home on budget and advise you on costs throughout the design and planning."

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11.40	Eco heating debate: PANEL SESSION
12.20	Renovating a home with character: updating an old house for modern eco living
13.00	How to add more space & value
13.40	The perfect way to build your home– plus the great build systems debate: PANEL SESSION
14.20	The different routes to managing your project
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EXTENSIONS
IDEAS FOR ADDING VALUE

With the right design, an extension project can significantly enhance your home's value and functionality. Take inspiration from this collection of eight fantastic real-life examples

DAVID VALINSKY

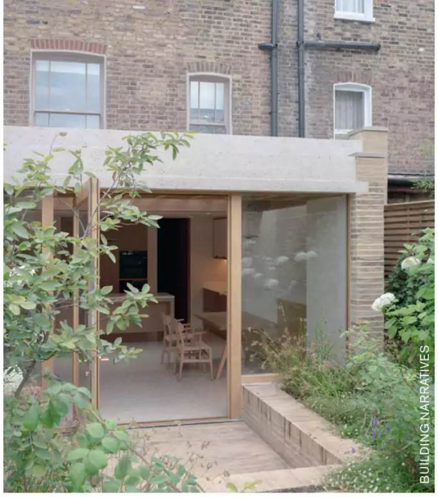
INCREASED VERSATILITY

This Victorian terraced house in London has been remodelled to enhance its functionality, aesthetic appeal and long-term value. A gault brick side extension, built with pale yellow masonry, complements the original structure, while modern black-framed sliding doors and frameless glass add contrast. The extension reconfigures the ground floor, creating a spacious flow from the front door to the kitchen-diner, with practical additions like a utility room and WC. The first-floor outrigger was rebuilt with a timber frame, wood fibre insulation and lime render, improving energy efficiency by reducing heat loss. A similar project would cost £350,000. **(www.woodrowvizor.co.uk)**

FLEXIBLE FAMILY LIVING

Atelier Baulier renovated and extended a Victorian house in Battersea, adding value by creating an adaptable, low-energy home fit for family life. The 40m² ground floor addition includes a dining area that connects to the garden, inspired by French greenhouses. A larch pergola provides shade, while reclaimed brick blends with the original structure. A loft conversion adds two bedrooms and a bathroom under a new mansard roof, improving the home's functionality. Eco-friendly materials were used where possible, including a timber frame, limecrete and wood-fibre insulation. Flexible features, such as pocket doors and under-stair storage, suit the family's needs. Budget around £350,000 for a similar extension design. **(www.atelierbaulier.com)**

ANDREW MEREDITH



BUILDING NARRATIVES

FOSSIL FUEL-FREE

This Victorian home in Hackney has had an eco makeover. A 182m^2 rear extension transforms the space and strengthens the garden connection. The heating system is fossil fuel-free, with air source heat pumps, underfloor heating and MVHR. Sustainable materials include composite flitch beams, Marshmoor bricks and low-carbon concrete, while wood fibre and aerogel insulation eliminate cold bridges. The extension project cost around £500,000. **(www.architectureforlondon.com)**

ADAM SCOTT

IMPROVED FUNCTIONALITY

Emil Eve transformed a tired Arts and Crafts house in Knebworth into a, light-filled home. The old layout, hampered by mismatched extensions, was unified to embrace period charm. A double-height central space connects the living areas, creating sightlines and a heart of the home. A side extension houses a kitchen and cycle training room, linked by a utility space with outdoor access. Exposed Douglas fir timber features, oak windows and rooflights add character. The project cost around £450,000. **(www.emileve.co.uk)**

EXPERT Q&A BOOSTING EQUITY, USABILITY & DESIRABILITY

Darren Bray, director of Studio BAD answers your FAQs on creating value adding extensions

How can a homeowner determine which type of extension might add the most value to their property?

It is impossible to give a one size fits all answer, as each house is different and owners' requirements vary so much. When we are working on projects, we look at a mix of factors, including the existing property's layout, the loft area, external space and the potential for extending. We can then design a cost-effective solution, which will add value in terms of the owner's lifestyle needs and the monetary value of the dwelling. The most cost-conscious way to extend your home is by altering what is already built, for example, converting your loft tends to be cheaper than adding an extension in terms of cost per m^2, and reconfiguring an existing layout can often unlock the space you need.

How can clients balance functionality with value-adding potential?

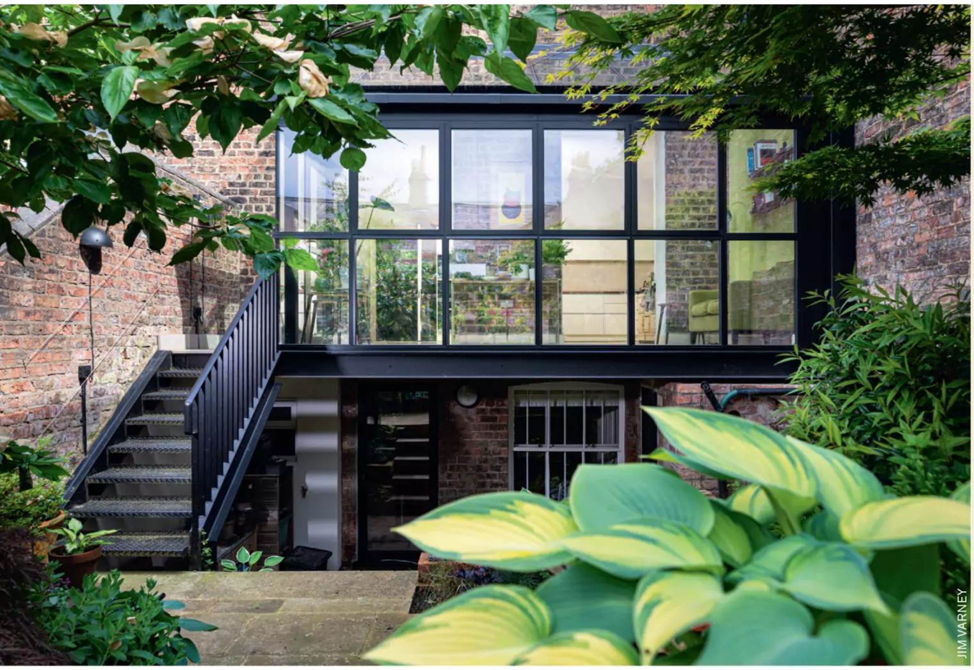
This depends on the purpose for the changes. If you're looking to live in your property long-term, we would suggest that it's better to focus on adapting the house to improve your specific lifestyle requirements, creating a more positive living space to enjoy being in, rather than just focusing on adding value. However, if you are thinking of making changes in order to sell in the near future, then we would recommend shifting the focus to look at the adaptations that could have the most impact on the property's value. Key areas to look at in terms of resell tend to include a spacious kitchen with ample room to entertain, adding an extra bedroom, thermal upgrades and looking at glazing and insulation to ensure lower running costs.

Can the quality of design and materials affect the value?

Good quality materials, fixtures and fittings can have a considerable positive impact on the long-term value of a property. They should last longer, reducing the need for frequent repairs and maintenance, and will ensure the look and functionality is maintained.

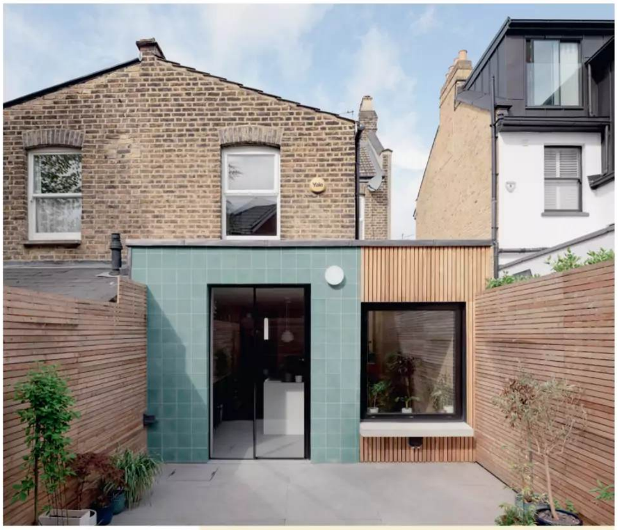
Are there any hidden value-boosters homeowners should consider?

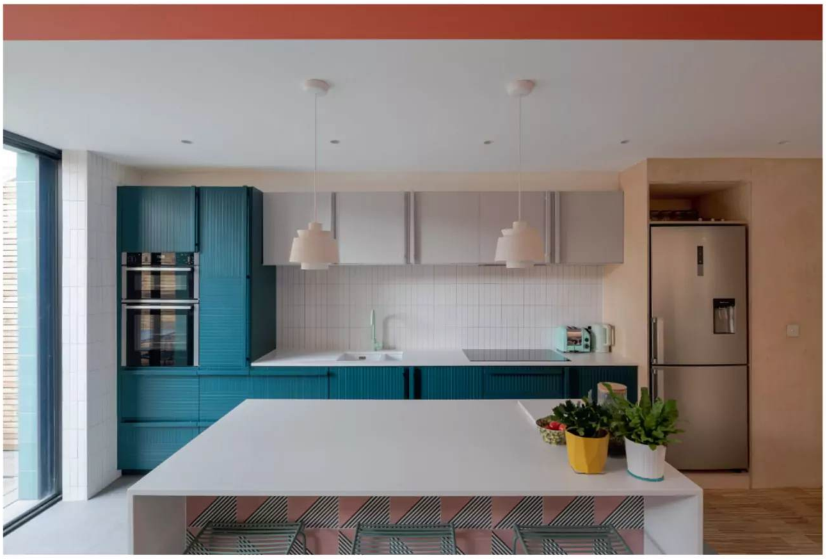
Increasing natural daylight can have a hugely positive impact on a space, and also reduces the constant need for artificial light and heating. It is possible to increase the opening sizes of existing windows to totally transform a room, creating a contemporary feel with higher levels of daylight, matched with improved thermal properties. In a new extension, consider the placement of glazing – rooflights are a great way to draw sunshine in throughout the seasons.


JIM VARNEY

MAXIMISING NATURAL LIGHT

Mass Architecture (**www.massarchitecture.com**) completely transformed a narrow, four-storey home with a striking floating glazed extension, replacing a metal terrace. Designed to maximise light, the new room ensures the lower ground floor remains bright and unaffected by shadows. Spanning nearly 5m, it features structural glass, slim bifold doors, aluminium windows and a glazed floor from IQ Glass. The extension seamlessly connects to the garden area, providing a bright, relaxing space. Its industrial aesthetic complements the home's modern style, too, while enhancing natural light, outdoor connections and the home's overall functionality. The steel glazed extension cost £50,000. **(www.iqglassuk.com)**





OUTDOOR CONNECTION

James Dale Architects transformed a Victorian terrace in Leytonstone with a single-storey rear and side infill extension, creating a spacious kitchen-diner with a strong link to the garden. The design prioritises natural light, introducing a large rear window, pocket sliding door and a tall lightwell at the extension's junction, drawing daylight deep into the original living room through an opaque internal window. Externally, blue terracotta tiles and vertical larch timber break down the extension's mass. An oversized concrete window cill doubles as an informal seating nook, enhancing outdoor gatherings. The project cost in the region of £110,000. (**www.jamesdalearchitects.com**)

CLEVER PROPORTIONS

Vale Garden Houses designed and constructed a stunning orangery for a historic listed property, adding 232m^2 of living space. Combining timber and aluminum components, the build is pre-assembled in a factory environment to ensure accuracy. A key design challenge was the boundary wall, which converged at an angle and was inset from the house gable line. The orangery's proportions and layout were tailored to conceal this, creating architectural symmetry while meeting listed building consents. The design enhances the home's flow and provides a functional, social hub. It features two sets of charming glazed double doors opening to the garden, plus a single door for easy access. **(www.valegardenhouses.co.uk)**

FUTUREPROOF COTTAGE

A contemporary extension has transformed Holly Cottage, a listed family home in the South Downs National Park. The project has enhanced the house's layout for modern living while preserving its historic character and charm. The design maximises natural light and expansive views, leveraging the home's excellent position and orientation. A carefully considered palette of materials, including timber and reclaimed brick, was chosen to ensure the addition would meet the building's design requirements and ensure it blended into the picturesque surroundings. The result not only enriches the home's functionality and aesthetics but also strengthens its relationship with the landscape. The project cost £350,000. **(www.studiobad.co.uk)**

EXPERT VIEW KEEPING YOUR PROJECT COST-EFFICIENT

Architect Ben Ridley, founder of Architecture for London, discusses adding value to your home while being mindful of your budget

Cost-effective wow factor

There are many ways to achieve this. For example, plywood-faced units with decorative timber can be a very budget-efficient way to have a beautiful grain on kitchen and joinery doors without the expense of using solid wood. Carcasses can be simple off-the-shelf items if saving in these areas is key. Circular rooflights can create a real statement, but this shape of glass is significantly pricier than square ones. A rectangular piece of glazing can be used with the reveal formed in curved MDF, or a similar board, to achieve the round shape. Large areas of sliding glass doors can be expensive, too. A more cost-effective solution to creating a wide span of opening panels is to have a large, fixed pane of glass, with a smaller opening section.

Design considerations

Our clients are becoming increasingly concerned with sustainability, both in terms of embodied energy and ongoing energy usage in space heating. For this reason, more natural, lower embodied energy materials, such as timber and natural stone, are becoming popular. Extensions should also be designed to be well insulated and airtight. It is important to consider simple alterations that can be made to the existing house to improve the overall thermal performance, too.

Common pitfalls to avoid

A full planning application may not always be the best approach to maximising the size of the extension. It is always worth first investigating the permitted development (PD) rights that exist at the property – often these PD rights can allow sizable add-ons. To help you stay on budget, a full cost report should be undertaken by your architect or a quantity surveyor (QS) early on in the design process, usually just before submission for consents. This can be revised as the design progresses.

Making the most of limited space in smaller extensions

There are some simple tips. For example, extendable dining tables can flexibly accommodate larger dinner parties, while being space efficient when needed. Pushing the dining table against a side wall, with a fixed seating bench can also be very space efficient. In smaller extensions, larger expanses of windows and rooflights always help to make the space feel bigger. Large rooflights also have the benefit of increasing the effective floor-to-ceiling height in a room.

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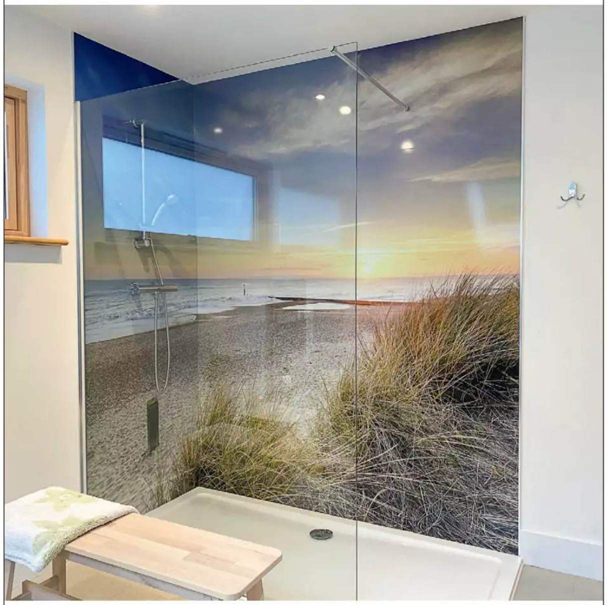

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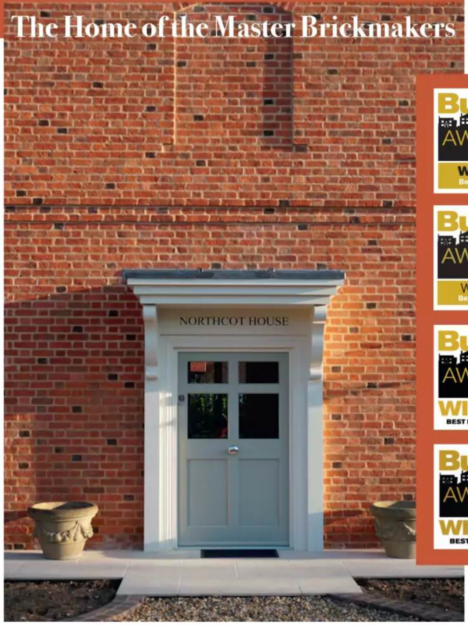

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ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BATHROOM RENOVATION COSTS

Kate Sandhu explains the key factors to consider for this type of project and shares her top tips on how to bring in a high-quality result that's within your budget

Bathrooms are an exciting space to renovate, offering a chance to add value and experiment with decor. However, factors like planning, budgeting, and material selection can make the process daunting. Understanding costs and processes is key to a successful update or complete overhaul.

Determining the cost

The average cost of a new bathroom in the UK ranges from £3,000 to £7,000, though this varies depending on size, design and complexity. A luxury renovation might exceed £10,000, while a budget-friendly update could start as low as £1,500. Key cost factors include:

Quality of fixtures & materials: Basic suites are cost-effective, while premium or bespoke options increase expenses. If you want to keep the price down, you can opt to procure items from a variety of sources, rather than purchasing them as part of a suite. This is more involved and can take time, but will often save you money.

Room size: Larger spaces need more materials and labour, raising costs, while small or compact areas may incur premiums due to difficult access for trades.

Renovation type: A simple swap of fixtures is cheaper than ripping out tiles or reconfiguring the layout, which would require plumbing and potentially structural work.

Labour costs: Skilled tradespeople typically account for 50%-60% of the total cost. While DIYers can save money, this type of renovation is complex – only tackle the job if you're confident in doing so. Electrical works in bathrooms are notifiable to building control; engaging a suitably-qualified electrician is the most straightforward option.

Regional variations: Generally, labour is more expensive in London and the South East than in most other regions – the exact price will depend on the complexity of the job.

Plumbing & electrics

When it comes to this aspect of your project, there's plenty to think about in terms of design, functionality and compliance. Typical plumbing work includes installing hot and cold water supply pipes, waste drainage and connecting fixtures (ie toilets, sinks and baths). If the layout is unchanged, pipework costs range from £500-£1,000. Relocating items, like toilets or showers, requires additional work, with a price of £1,000-£3,000. Adding new drainage points or addressing issues in older homes may increase costs, too. A full pipework installation for a new bathroom averages between £1,500 and £2,500.

Electrical work is more complex than elsewhere in a house as it needs to comply with Part P of the Building Regulations. Your electrician can offer advice, but you need to think about RCD-protected circuits and IP-rated lighting. Common work includes switches and lighting, but also shaver sockets, heated towel rails and an extractor fan to

Above: The multi-layered base of engineered flooring makes it super durable and suitable for use in bathrooms. Priced from £156 per m^2, this Bristol Tectonic Oak from Chaunceys (chancey.co.uk) features a high-grade birch ply core with a top layer of European oak, in a choice of either 4mm or 6mm thickness

BALANCING QUALITY & VALUE

While tricky, this aspect of your renovation project is essential. Though it's tempting to cut costs by choosing the cheapest products, this can lead to higher expenses over time due to frequent repairs and replacements. Investing in high-quality materials and skilled workmanship ensures a durable, functional and visually appealing space that provides long-term value.

Low-cost products often come with hidden downsides. For example, cheap taps, showerheads, or pipes might not meet durability standards, leading to leaks or malfunctions. Poorly constructed cabinets or vanities may warp in the humid environment, while budget tiles or vinyl flooring could fade, crack or develop mould. The need to repair or replace these items can quickly outweigh the initial savings.

Conversely, choosing high quality materials doesn't necessarily mean opting for the most expensive option. A mid-range suite with durable finishes, such as ceramic or porcelain, can provide reliability and aesthetic appeal without breaking the bank. Similarly, prioritising features like water-efficient fixtures or energy-saving lighting may cost more upfront but deliver significant savings on utility bills.

Working with trusted, experienced tradespeople is another crucial factor in balancing quality and value. Using skilled professionals helps to ensure that installations meet UK regulations, preventing issues like water damage or faulty electrics. While their services may come at a higher cost, they save money in the long run by delivering work that stands the test of time.

Above right: This shower room features the Vos shower range (ceiling arm, £99; overhead shower, £250; round water outlet, £185; wall valves, £200) plus Cleo brushed black radiator, £725, all JTP (jtpuk.co.uk)

Below: Wall panels are great for quickly waterproofing a zone. This Turtle design from Showerscape (showerscape.co.uk) starts from £494 for an 800mm x 2,200mm panel

avoid damp. Adding features, such as heated towel rails or underfloor heating, can increase costs to £1,000-£2,000.

Floor & wall coverings

Floor and wall coverings play a significant role in the aesthetics and durability of your space, but there are many options. With so many factors to consider, including budget, maintenance and style, it can feel overwhelming. Let's break down the most popular solutions:

Ceramic and porcelain tiles: Durable and water-resistant, these range from £15-£50 per m^2 for materials, with installation costs of £25-£50 per m^2.

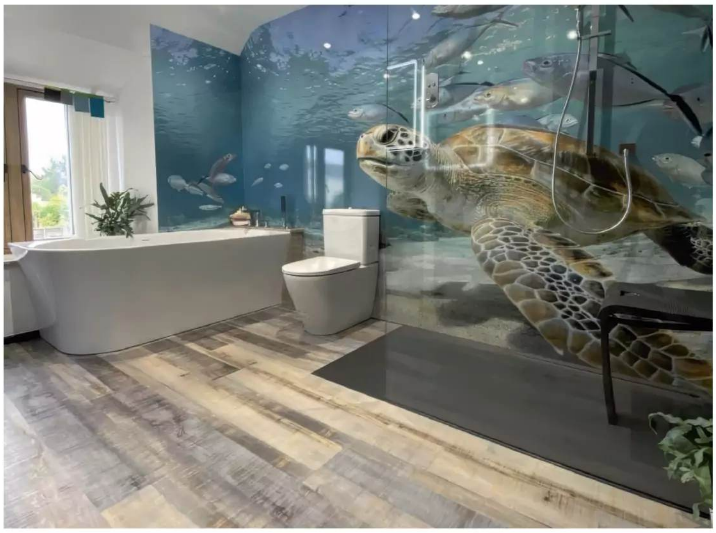
Vinyl: Affordable and easy to maintain, this material costs £10-£30 per m^2, with labour averaging £15-£25 per m^2.

Natural stone: Luxurious but high-maintenance, stone can cost up to £200 per m^2, and £100 per m^2 for install.

Waterproof wall panels: A seamless alternative to tiles, panels cost £50-£100 per m^2 and are easy to clean.

Heating your bathroom

This aspect of your project is a delicate balancing act between efficiency, comfort and aesthetics. Key options include radiators, heated towel rails and underfloor heating (UFH). Traditional radiators are a simple solution; they provide effective warmth and are easily connected to your existing central heating. They're also incredibly flexible in terms of style and colour. Costs can vary hugely – a standard white Stelrad type will set you back around £60, whereas a traditional cast iron or column appliance could run into the hundreds. Installation wise, this will be done as part of broader plumbing work but may add around £100.



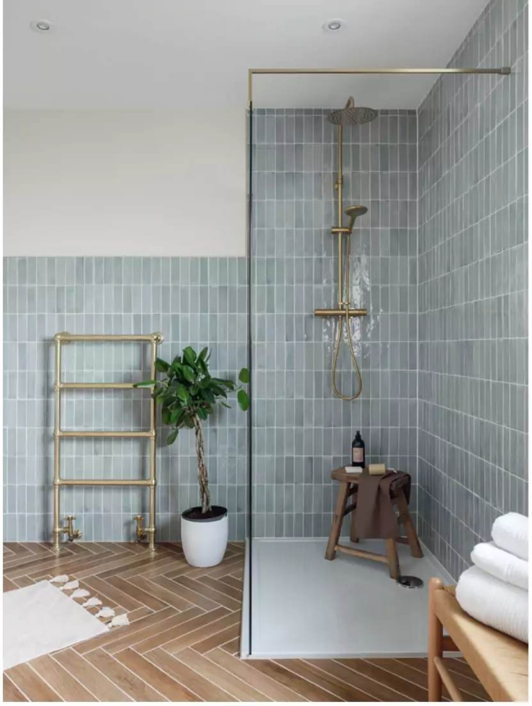
Heated towel rails can be plumbed into the central heating or electrically powered. Basic models start at £50-£100, while premium designs reach £300-£600. Expect to pay from £100-£200 for installation.

UFH provides even warmth and frees up wall space – ideal for smaller rooms. Electric systems are easier to install, costing £50-£75 per m^2 for materials, but are typically more expensive to run. Water-based solutions are more efficient long-term, but costlier to install at £1,000-£2,500, including labour. Labour costs for UFH are typically £300-£600 for an average-sized bathroom.

Bathroom suites

Buying the key components as part of a set offers a cost-effective option for kitting out your bathroom, particularly if you're seeking a cohesive design. Suites typically include a toilet, basin and bath/shower, the idea being that you buy them together and benefit from discounted package rates. But this isn't always the case. Prices vary hugely; a simple white porcelain toilet, sink and bath costs around £300, but the quality may be lacking – especially the bath, which may be made from poorer quality materials.

Bathroom suites can run into the thousands – if you're going all out for a cast iron bath or a Thomas Crapper toilet, one item alone could be £2,000. While suites simplify decision-making and ensure compatibility between fixtures, sourcing individual pieces allows for a tailored approach. It offers flexibility to mix and match styles, materials and brands to suit your taste. However, it can be more expensive, especially when selecting premium products. Ensuring compatibility between fixtures and managing multiple suppliers adds complexity, too. Prices



Left: Blues, pinks and brass fixtures are set against wood-effect chevron floor tiles in this stylish bathroom, part of an interior designer's own self build. The suite, from Roper Rhodes (roperrhodes.co.uk), includes a Unity shower with bar valve

vary widely: toilets from £100-£700; basins £50-£500; baths £150-£3,000+; and showers £200-£1,000+.

Showers & enclosures

There's nothing better than the feeling of getting into a warm shower – but there is an overwhelming wealth of options. Electric showers are affordable and operate independently of your boiler, costing £50-£400. Priced between £100 and £500, mixer designs deliver consistent water temperatures. Power showers boost water pressure and are priced between £150 and £600. Finally, digital products offer a high-tech solution with precise temperature control, costing £300-£1,500.

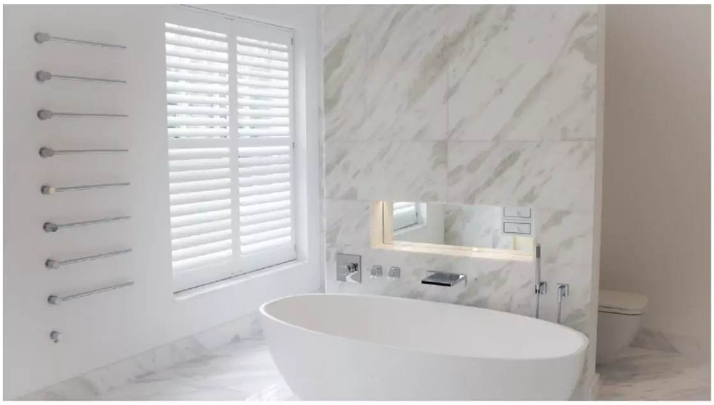
Shower enclosures range from compact quadrant designs (£200-£1,000) to luxurious wet rooms (£2,000-£5,000). If you need to save space and money, then a simple shower fitted over your bathtub is a great option and can look super chic with the right fittings.

Lighting & extraction

Lighting and ventilation are crucial elements for a functional and inviting bathroom. Recessed spotlights or flush-mounted ceiling lights are a practical and cost-effective choice, starting at £10 per fitting. For added flair, consider LED strips or smart lighting systems, which can cost up to £500. Proper ventilation prevents damp and mould, so extractor fans are a must. Basic fans start at £20, while humidity-sensing models cost £60-£200. Installation typically adds a further £100-£300.

Installation & labour

Fitting a bathroom involves plumbing, electrics, tiling and decorating. Hiring professionals ensures high quality and compliance with regulations but can be expensive, with labour accounting for 50–60% of the total cost. For example, in a £6,000 mid-range renovation, expect to spend £3,000-£4,000 on skilled tradespeople. Doing the installation on a DIY basis can save money, but only if you're confident in your abilities. Mistakes in plumbing or tiling can lead to leaks, damage and additional costs to correct errors. For complex tasks, such as pipework or electrical installations, hiring professionals is highly recommended.



Above: Shutters are easy to clean and won't hold moisture, making them a great option for the bathroom. This elegant set is from The Shutter Studio (theshutterstudio.com)

Managing your renovation

Ultimately, a successful renovation depends on careful planning and clear priorities. Establish a budget and stick to it, balancing quality with affordability. Select materials that suit your lifestyle and maintenance preferences, and work with experienced professionals for structural work, plumbing and electrics to avoid costly mistakes.

HIDDEN COSTS OF BATHROOM RENOVATIONS

It's easy to focus on the visible upgrades like fixtures, tiles, and finishes – but hidden costs can significantly impact your budget.

One major expense is **dismantling and disposing** of your outdated fixtures. It can cost £300-£600, depending on disposal fees in your area.

Making good damaged surfaces is often overlooked – removing tiles can leave an uneven surface, requiring replastering or additional prep. This can add £200-£500, depending on the work needed.

Finishing touches can add up quickly, too. For instance, once the suite is installed, you'll likely need to paint it. Professional work costs around £100-£300, depending on the size of the space. Flooring and skirting may also need replacing, with materials and labour totalling £200-£1,000.

Storage can enhance practicality and aesthetics but will also add to your outlay. Budget-friendly cabinets, vanities and shelving may cost £100-£300, while custom designs can exceed £1,000.

Small but essential details like **mirrors and decorative fixtures** can quickly add hundreds of pounds to your overall project spend.

KATE SANDHU

Kate Sandhu is a renovation pro, helping others to understand the process and save as much money as possible via her home renovation course. She shares a wealth of knowledge, as well as DIY tips via her blog renovatelikekate.com and Instagram account @renovatelikekate

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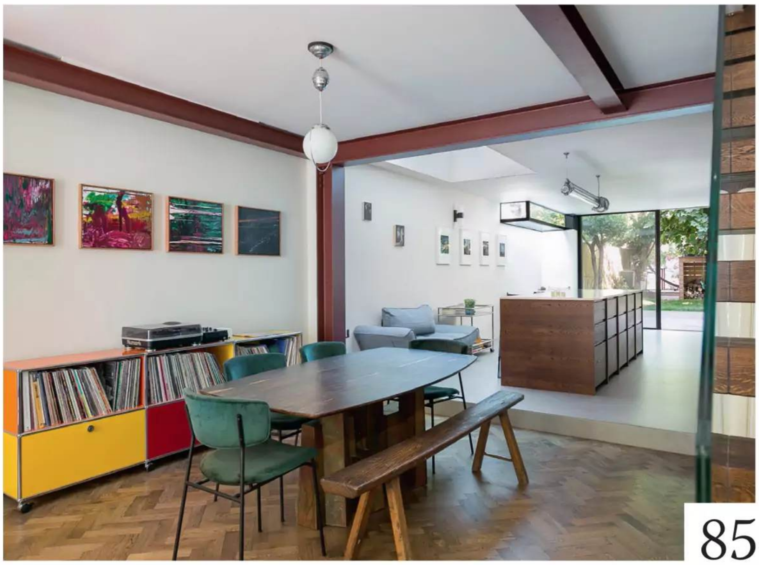

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JIM STEPHENSON

BEGINNERS' GUIDE

Building an eco home

Set your self build sustainability agenda with **Nigel Griffiths**' advice on the key elements for creating a low-impact, low-energy home

Top: Created by Studio Bark (www.studiobark.co.uk) for a young family, this five-bedroom home meets their aspirations for off-grid living. It features a large solar array twinned with high-capacity batteries and a ground source heat pump, with a Midas biofuel generator that provides backup power in the cloudier months

The term eco home means different things to different people. Some will want a house built with natural materials and an organic garden. Others look to install all the latest gadgets and power their home with systems like a solar PV array and battery storage. So, the starting question for any eco project is what, exactly, are you trying to achieve?

You might be shocked at my first piece of advice, which is don't get hooked on energy and carbon. Creating a truly sustainable home is about much more than this. Typically, these are the key areas you'll want to consider:

● **Health & wellbeing** ● **Low-impact materials**
● **Energy efficiency** ● **Water efficiency**
● **Sustainable drainage** ● **Ecological outside space**

In each case, it's important to take care when it comes to the use of metrics. A product designed to deliver low energy in use might involve expending a huge amount of energy to manufacture. This embodied impact is often ignored. It might also generate pollution or use up finite resources. It can be difficult to unlock the wider impact of what, on the face of things, feels like a sustainable choice.

Healthy homes

Building a house is first and foremost about the people who inhabit it. So, always begin with health and wellbeing when making decisions on your project. A good starting point is to avoid materials that give off toxic fumes, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Whatever eco standard you're building to, be sure the property benefits from plenty of fresh air, so it can get rid of pollutants quickly. There's no point hermetically sealing your house in the name of energy efficiency, and then having to live with poor indoor air quality because there's insufficient background ventilation.

Creating a healthy environment isn't just about avoiding pollution. Mental health is just as important – our homes are where we spend the majority of our lives, and for those of us who work from them, potentially nearly all our time. So, if you're building new, aim to maximise ceiling heights and natural daylight. There's good evidence that this makes a positive contribution to mental health.

Right: You don't need a great deal of solar thermal capacity to make a sizeable dent in your hot water requirements; around 1m^2-2m^2 per person is typical in the UK

Beauty matters, too. If you can make your home beautiful inside, then you'll find it relaxing and uplifting to live there. If you can make it appealing on the outside, too, then it will enhance the neighbourhood and make life better for others. Plus, it's more likely to be conserved and enjoyed by future owners, rather than knocked down and replaced (using up additional resources).

Don't forget the importance of outdoor space in terms of living a healthy lifestyle, both mentally and physically. Anyone who grows even just a few herbs and vegetables will tell you how important this is to them.

Check out **www.self-build.co.uk/healthy-home** for Build It's latest advice on creating a house that supports your wellbeing.

Low-impact materials

The biggest environmental impact from building a new home comes not from running it, but from the construction process. For many of you, this will be the largest single project of your lives. It's a good idea to focus on the materials that go into the structural fabric and do what you can to deliver positive results for your lifestyle, health and the environment.

STUNNING WOODLAND HOME

Jonathan and Joanna Lunn left city life behind to build this stunning contemporary home on a woodland site in the South Downs National Park. Keen to make the process as stress-free as possible, they enlisted Baufritz (www.baufritz.co.uk) to provide a turnkey package – which meant that, once the groundworks and foundations were in, Baufritz would take care of the rest of the build and fit-out for them.

To miminise the visual impact of the house, the design by architects Nilsson Pflugfelder revolves around the concept of twin cottages, with two volumes connected at the centre but appearing to slide past one another. The natural materials palette includes pre-weathered larch cladding to complement the Baufritz construction system – a timber frame setup with organic wood-shaving insulation.

The company is renowned for creating super-efficient, high-spec homes that provide a healthy living environment, with great indoor air quality thanks to the use of certified natural materials. This is complemented by modern technology, such as an air source heat pump and mechanical ventilation.

There are some very low-impact construction methods – such as straw bale, cob and hemp – but these aren't for everyone. As such, there is of course a middle ground between this and eco-bling. A low-impact home, with low embodied energy and carbon, can still be achieved by making tweaks to standard build processes and materials. For example, many self builders will opt for timber frame, as it is inherently sustainable and allows for maximum choice of sustainable insulation materials. Timber also locks up CO2 in a building (as carbohydrate). So, with careful specification, it may even be possible to claim that a building is carbon-negative in construction.

People who wish to build sustainably prefer natural materials, and tend to avoid plastics. We didn't have this product until the 20th century and managed perfectly well without it for thousands of years. So, think carefully before saving a few pounds by putting in PVCu windows. Insulation is another big-ticket item. There are plenty of low-impact insulation materials available, ranging from wood fibre to mineral wool. Certainly, there's no need to use oil-derived plastics, such as polyisocyanurate.

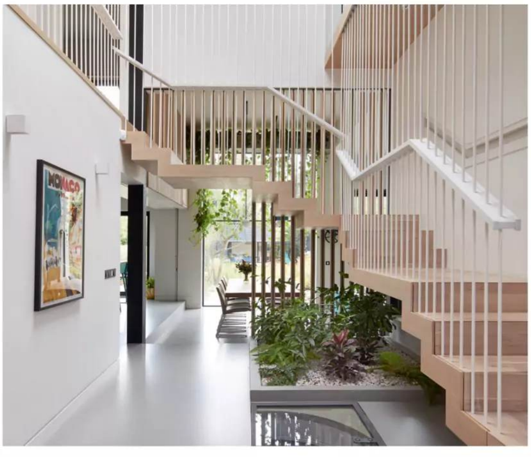
The same approach goes all the way through the build, from foundations to floor coverings, from the roof to the kitchen and the type of paint you choose. Minimise pollution, maximise your use of natural and renewable materials. Visit **www.self-build.co.uk/embodied-energy** for a more in-depth look at choosing products with a low environmental impact.

Building fabric & reducing heat losses

In recent years, changes to the Building Regulations mean that all new homes are now very well insulated, so the need for space heating has fallen dramatically. Depending on the site, it is now possible to eliminate the demand for central heating (and cooling) almost completely by using a fabric-first approach and passive solar design. See the box-out (overleaf) for more on this.

Heating & hot water

There has been huge focus on how we provide our space heating, given the move away from fossil fuels towards



Below left: Designing a welcoming space that's full of daylight, well-ventilated and connects with the outdoors is a key step towards creating a long-term sustainable home. This project by Scenario Architecture (www.scenarioarchitecture.com) delivers that and more, with features such as extensive insulation, an air source heat pump and solar PV. It also features a wow-factor atrium staircase with internal courtyard-style planting, plus a new mature tree as part of the rear landscaping to protect against overheating

HOLISTIC BARN CONVERSION

For their barn conversion project, Toby Diggens and Bella Lowes decided to embrace the Living Building Challenge – an international accreditation that considers the wider setting of a building and its ecological impact, rather than purely fabric efficiency or energy in use. "It's about innovation; not just hitting a standard," says Toby. "I loved the idea of doing more than just enough. For instance, we used timber from our own woodland – so, while it was non-FSC, it was exceptionally sustainable."

The Living Building Challenge also considers more subjective elements, such as calibre of the overall design and what it's like to live in. "When a building emerges using the natural products of the landscape, people are wowed," says Toby. "There's also the ecological element, which is why we've added lots of bird and bat boxes." Other materials choices included clay plaster, a corrugated tin and green roof to replace the previous PVC-coated covering, and reduced-cement concrete for the strip foundations beneath a new timber corner.

There's modern tech, too, including a solar panel array and Tesla Powerwall batteries. Heating is provided by a woodburning stove, fueled with timber from hedge-laying and coppicing on their farm. "We said no to Passivhaus and heat recovery ventilation," explains Toby. "Going super-airtight wouldn't suit our lifestyle, plus it's difficult to achieve in an old barn. We have a nice balance."

electrification of heat. Really, this focus should be shifted to existing buildings rather than new, because if you're building a home with very low heat demand, it frankly makes little difference how you heat it.

For that residual demand, new builders are of course encouraged to use heat pumps and these will certainly be lower carbon in use than gas boilers, thanks to the rapid decarbonisation of the electricity grid.

Perhaps more importantly, while our need for space heating has fallen, so the demand for hot water has risen (we take more baths and showers than we used to). This means domestic hot water (DHW) now has a greater impact than space heating in many new dwellings. So, use it efficiently and perhaps install solar water heating, which should cover around 50% of your hot water needs.

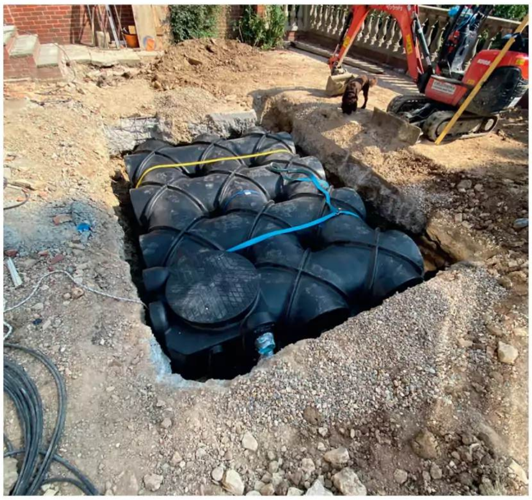
Right: Natural and non-toxic, Clayworks (www.clay-works.com) clay plaster adds a warm, textural and through-coloured finish for internal walls

Solar water heaters simply transfer heat directly from the roof collector into the hot water cylinder (see **www.self-build.co.uk/solar-thermal**). This is not the same as photovoltaic (PV) panels, which make electricity from light and have now become widespread. Confusingly, however, you can use excess PV-generated electricity to heat your hot water through an immersion heater.

Setting PV aside for a moment, it would normally be more efficient (and cheaper) to provide hot water using your heat pump rather than an electric immersion heater. While an air source heat pump will be slightly less efficient at supplying hot water than it is for space heating, it should still deliver at least two units of heat for DHW purposes for each unit of electricity input.

Water use

Despite all the focus on energy use and CO2 emissions, it's worth bearing in mind human settlement can only continue where there is an adequate supply of potable water (that which we use for drinking & washing). In some areas of the UK, this supply is under pressure.



Low flush WCs are now mandatory, and low-flow taps and showers can also help to keep down potable water use. But there are much more significant water savings available through rainwater harvesting. These systems collect rainwater from the roof and store it in tanks for use in WC flushing, washing machines and outdoors (garden watering, car washing etc). As WC flushing is often the biggest culprit for water usage, you'll make handy savings in running costs with rainwater harvesting.

If you are building new, you will already have an excavator on site, so the marginal cost of installing an underground storage tank should be relatively low. You'll also be able to easily run the necessary pipework (harvested rainwater must be distributed in separate, clearly marked pipes). While mains water essentially functions as a giant rainwater harvesting system, on balance domestic-scale installations still seem to be worth the money – especially for new builds.

See **www.self-build.co.uk/save-water** for more tips on how to reduce water usage around the home.

Sustainable drainage

Heavy rainfall is more common these days, and rainwater that used to soak into fields, gardens and lawns now falls on car parks, drives, roads, roofs and patios. From here, it is channeled directly to the drainage system, sometimes causing flooding downstream. Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) have three main aims:

- To reduce flooding by delaying the discharge of rainwater.
- To enhance water quality.
- To improve the environment and provide habitats for wildlife.

The burden on our rivers and floodplains can be reduced by using permeable surfaces wherever possible for hard landscaping – decks, patios, gravel etc – and installing soakaways to drain any solid paving.

Heavy rainfall can be slowed down by the use of holding ponds, and rainwater harvesting can make a small contribution. While larger developments are already required to have a SUDS strategy in place, self builders can adopt the same principles and do what they can to reduce flood risk and - if possible - to enhance ecology. Visit **www.self-build.co.uk/suds** for more advice.

QUICK GUIDE PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN

This approach to design and construction is all about taking advantage of a free natural resource – the sun – to reduce your home's energy demand. By taking the right steps, you can significantly reduce the need for heating and artificial lighting in your new home – while avoiding the risk of overheating. There are six key aspects to effective passive solar design:

Orientation If your site has a good southern aspect, then position the house to face south in order to maximise the amount of solar gain.

Fenestration Large windows on the southern elevation will allow the heat of the sun to penetrate into the core of the building, while reducing fenestration on the northern elevation will minimise heat losses.

Superinsulation Unless space is constrained, it is possible to go beyond the Building Regulations and achieve even lower U-values (a measure of heat loss, where lower numbers indicate better performance) then are currently required, at very little extra cost.

Airtightness Again, the regs now require good levels of airtightness but, in a super-insulated home, air leakage may become the major source of heat loss. So, airtightness becomes critical if you want to achieve certain standards or use a heat recovery system.

Thermal mass It is essential to build in plenty of thermal mass. This is usually done with dense materials (such as concrete blocks) that can absorb the heat of the sun during the day and radiate it back out at night. The building therefore becomes a giant storage heater. This is also important to help prevent overheating.

Solar shading Overheating is a significant risk in passive solar design, so effective shading is required to filter out excess sunlight when the sun is high, while allowing it to enter when the sun is low in the cooler months. This could be achieved by natural means (eg trees) or with built-in components such as roof overhangs and brises soleil.

Even if your site doesn't have a good southern aspect, it is still possible to achieve very low space heating demand by super-insulating the building and aiming for the highest standards of airtightness.

Landscaping

Mainstream developers leave the outside space until last, by which time the topsoil has often been degraded and sometimes polluted. Self builders, on the other hand, have the freedom to start with the garden, protecting existing assets/features and planting trees and bushes early.

Growing vegetables and keeping a few chickens might sound like The Good Life, but it's called that for a reason. Building a beautiful garden also gives you more options to relax and entertain, whilst supporting a wide range of birds, mammals, insects and even amphibians. Perhaps this, above all else, will help to develop your approach to becoming a great eco self builder. And don't forget to incorporate a compost heap in your plans!

Above left: Rainwater harvesting is relatively easy and affordable to integrate into a new build house; particularly if you excavate for the tank at the groundworks stage. Shown here is a shallow-dig tank design from Rainwater Harvesting (www.rainwaterharvesting.co.uk), which requires less excavation and is suitable for sites with a high water table

NIGEL GRIFFITHS

Nigel Griffiths specialises in sustainable construction and eco-renovation and is the author of the Haynes Eco House Manual. He advises UK government on retrofit programmes and inspects renewable heat installations on behalf of Ofgem. You can chat to Nigel at the Build It Live shows.

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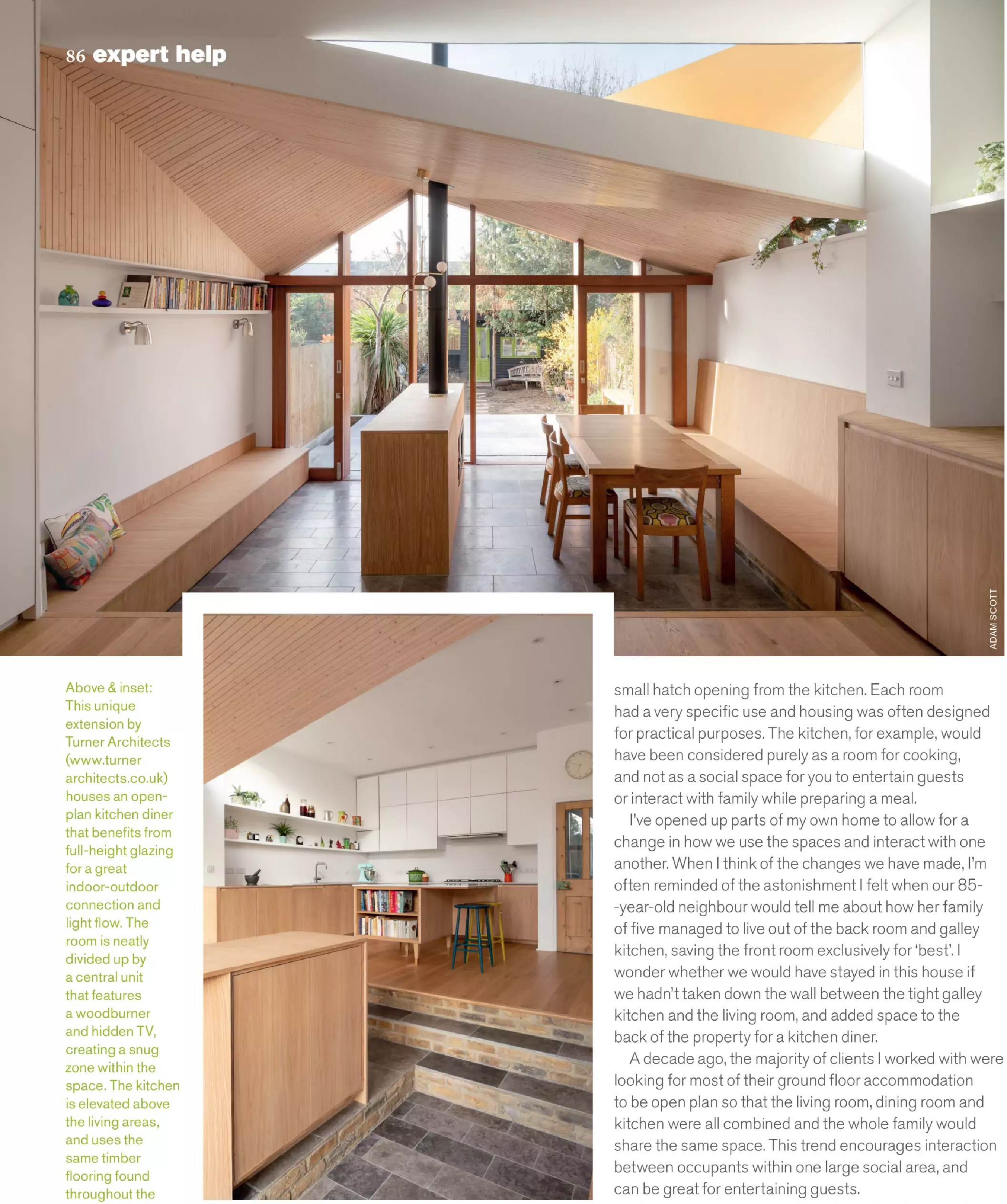
LUKASZ WIELKOSZYNSKI

OPEN VS BROKEN PLAN LAYOUTS

Architect Opinder Liddar reveals how to get the right balance between large shared spaces and private, snug rooms

Until the 1990's, most housing in this country tended to have separate rooms for different functions. If you've bought an older property that hasn't been modernised, you may sense this as you walk through the house and wonder how people lived like this for so long. The way we build our homes, and people's lifestyles, continually evolve over time, meaning what was considered normal years ago is now quite different. Here, I'm taking you through the range of possibilities for the room layout in your own design, in order to meet your living needs, preferences and to provide ample natural light throughout your home.

Top & above: Designed by William Tozer Associates (www.williamtozerassociates.com) this raised kitchen space neatly zones the open plan kitchen-diner, with a central island counter further dividing up the space. A rooflight illuminates a smaller, casual eating area. Elsewhere, a series of discreet pocket doors provide flexible living through the rest of the plan



ADAM SCOTT

Above & inset: This unique extension by Turner Architects (www.turnerarchitects.co.uk) houses an open-plan kitchen diner that benefits from full-height glazing for a great indoor-outdoor connection and light flow. The room is neatly divided up by a central unit that features a woodburner and hidden TV, creating a snug zone within the space. The kitchen is elevated above the living areas, and uses the same timber flooring found throughout the rest of the home

The importance of a good layout

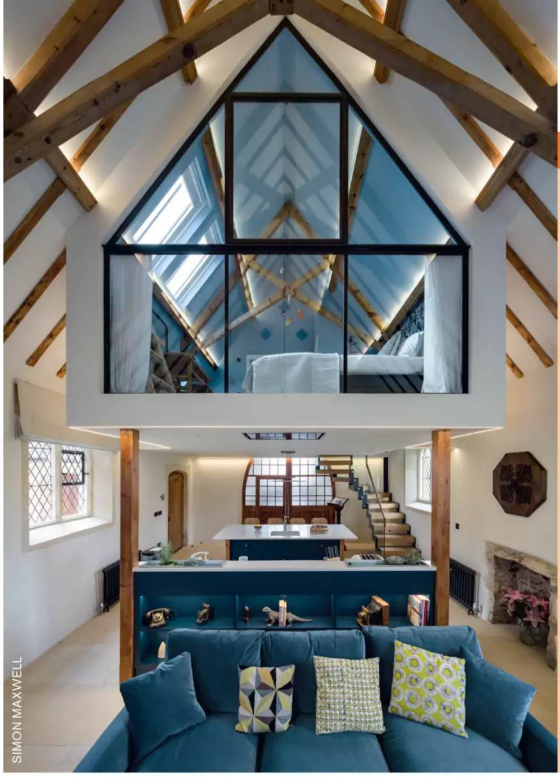
While for many years having a series of separate rooms for different functions was the accepted way to live, you would often find that natural light levels inside these houses was poor and the layout did not make best use of all the available space, nor allow the social interaction that we often want in our homes today. The living room, dining room and kitchen would all be walled off from one another, and at best you might have found a set of double doors to link the living room with the dining room, or a small hatch opening from the kitchen. Each room had a very specific use and housing was often designed for practical purposes. The kitchen, for example, would have been considered purely as a room for cooking, and not as a social space for you to entertain guests or interact with family while preparing a meal.

I've opened up parts of my own home to allow for a change in how we use the spaces and interact with one another. When I think of the changes we have made, I'm often reminded of the astonishment I felt when our 85-year-old neighbour would tell me about how her family of five managed to live out of the back room and galley kitchen, saving the front room exclusively for 'best'. I wonder whether we would have stayed in this house if we hadn't taken down the wall between the tight galley kitchen and the living room, and added space to the back of the property for a kitchen diner.

A decade ago, the majority of clients I worked with were looking for most of their ground floor accommodation to be open plan so that the living room, dining room and kitchen were all combined and the whole family would share the same space. This trend encourages interaction between occupants within one large social area, and can be great for entertaining guests.

More recently, people have realised that they need to incorporate rooms where family members can be by themselves or where they can divide into smaller groups, as well as having the larger social spaces. We're seeing a move towards house designs that combine spacious open plan areas with more intimate rooms – the trending name for this is a broken plan layout.

I find it interesting how our lifestyles evolve, and how the needs of most clients today have moved away from an entirely open plan design. The idea of everyone chatting with one another or enjoying a television programme



SIMON MAXWELL

Left: Build It readers Geoff and Julie Bolam created this stunning mezzanine pod when transforming a Victorian church into their ideal home. The space allowed for an extra bedroom and meant they didn't have to sacrifice the existing layout by putting up new internal walls

QUICK LOOK MEZZANINE LEVELS

Most new houses and two-storey extensions we design will include a vaulted ceiling. This feature can help to create beautiful and enjoyable living spaces, and are high enough that we can often introduce another level that you can fully or partly stand up in. The introduction of a small floor area at a higher level within a vaulted ceiling can be useful as a place for a futon type bed for guests, somewhere to exercise, a home office, or simply extra storage.

These spaces are referred to as a mezzanine level. If they're to be habitable spaces, then you do need to consider safe access and guarding to the area via a staircase that complies with Building Regulations. You'll also need to ensure this is designed at the outset of your project, as a regulation-compliant staircase will take up a lot of the original floor level and there are certain head heights that must be achieved, again to meet the Regulations.

If your mezzanine is going to be a storage area, then you can easily access this with a drop down ladder which will take up much less space at the lower level – this may be more appropriate for smaller sized rooms and non-habitable areas.

together has changed dramatically in recent times and has challenged the idea of entirely open plan living. Even when everyone is in the same space together, most individuals in that group are likely to be doing separate things, like engaging with their phones and laptops or playing digital games rather than having a shared experience. Therefore, an element of separation and the introduction of flexible spaces or a broken plan can add value to your design, as it reflects the needs of you and your family's evolving lifestyles.

Dividing up your floorplan

You can still have one large open plan area to get that sought-after sense of space and enjoy the drama of scale. To get the most from this, you need to consider how you'll live in this open area. You'll likely have an idea of where you want your kitchen to be, with the dining area nearby. However, it may be advantageous for the lounge space, with sofas and the TV, to be separated in some form, from the eating and cooking zones.

If you're designing your own home from scratch, you could consider altering the floor levels to change the character of these distinct spaces. Just one or two steps, or a slope, will also change ceiling heights, creating a different feel as you move from one room to the next.

If you have a sloping site this can work really well and, in some cases, the lower level could be even deeper than others, perhaps slightly below ground level, depending on the nature of the land on your site.

If steps are not practical, then using different flooring materials or finishes between rooms, and perhaps mixing up the wall colour, can help to distinguish between the subtle change in use from one area to another.

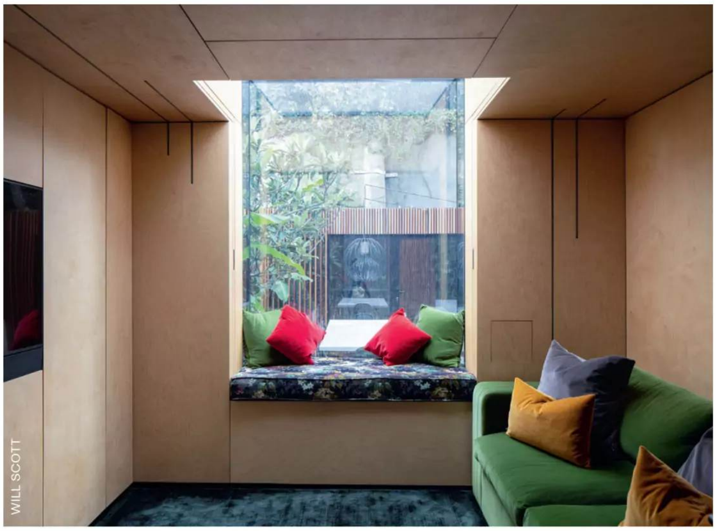
In many designs, when clients want to maintain a large open area but also define different zones within this, we will include screens within the space. This could be open shelving units so that the spaces are linked visually, giving you a feature around which to place furniture. This could also be an open fireplace with a woodburner as the feature, bridging the gap between two distinct areas.

Creating flexible spaces

It may be that on several occasions you need your house to be fully open plan, maybe for a party or for family get togethers. At other times, you may appreciate being able to close off spaces when you need peace and quiet or for when there are different groups of visitors in your house.

Below: Designed by Snug Architects (www.snugarchitects.co.uk), this home in Hampshire features multiple pocket doors with a broken plan setup, allowing the homeowners to zone off or open up the kitchen-living-dining area, whenever needed

FRAZER MARR


WILL SCOTT

Above & right: Build It readers Kate and Gary Westlake incorporated this cosy snug into their home design. The compact space provides the perfect spot to relax and unwind, while the stunning up and over Oriel picture window floods the room with light and creates an eye-catching focal point

Moveable internal walls or pocket doors can provide the ideal balance between open-plan living and creating private areas. These features fold or slide back into your walls so that they do not interrupt the overall space when you want to make use of the open plan. A low wall is also a useful design feature which can help to define different spaces and distinguish seating areas from dining spaces, or to separate your bed from a dressing area.

In cooler months of the year you may also want to close off spaces so they're easier to heat. Rather than maintaining one very large open plan area at the same temperature, it would be more sustainable and cost-effective to be able to break it up, using pockets doors or screens, so that you heat a smaller, cosier room.

The kitchen space has become one of the most frequently occupied rooms in a house, often at the heart of the home, used as the primary social space. It enables you to still interact with friends and family whilst cooking, avoiding anyone being shut off. Food preparation can tend to generate considerable mess and washing up which you'd rather not have on display. To help with this, in some kitchen designs, we have included a screen, low wall or small utility area so that the cooking clutter is out of sight for a while and you can relax with your guests.

Incorporating private rooms

The 2020 Covid 19 pandemic certainly brought home the deficiencies of open plan design, when suddenly everybody was at home and needed their own space in which to work, study or get some peace and quiet. Even now, with more and more people working from home, we find that creating balance between private and open spaces is key to most initial design briefs.

In new house designs we often include a separate ground floor room in such a way that it has the potential to be a flexible, multiple use space that could be a winter snug, an office, or spot for older children to be with friends without disturbing the others on the same floor. It's useful to ensure that this area could become a bedroom should you or a member of your family not be able to get upstairs easily either now or in the future, and so we usually site this close to a downstairs cloakroom which may include a shower and all the necessary facilities.

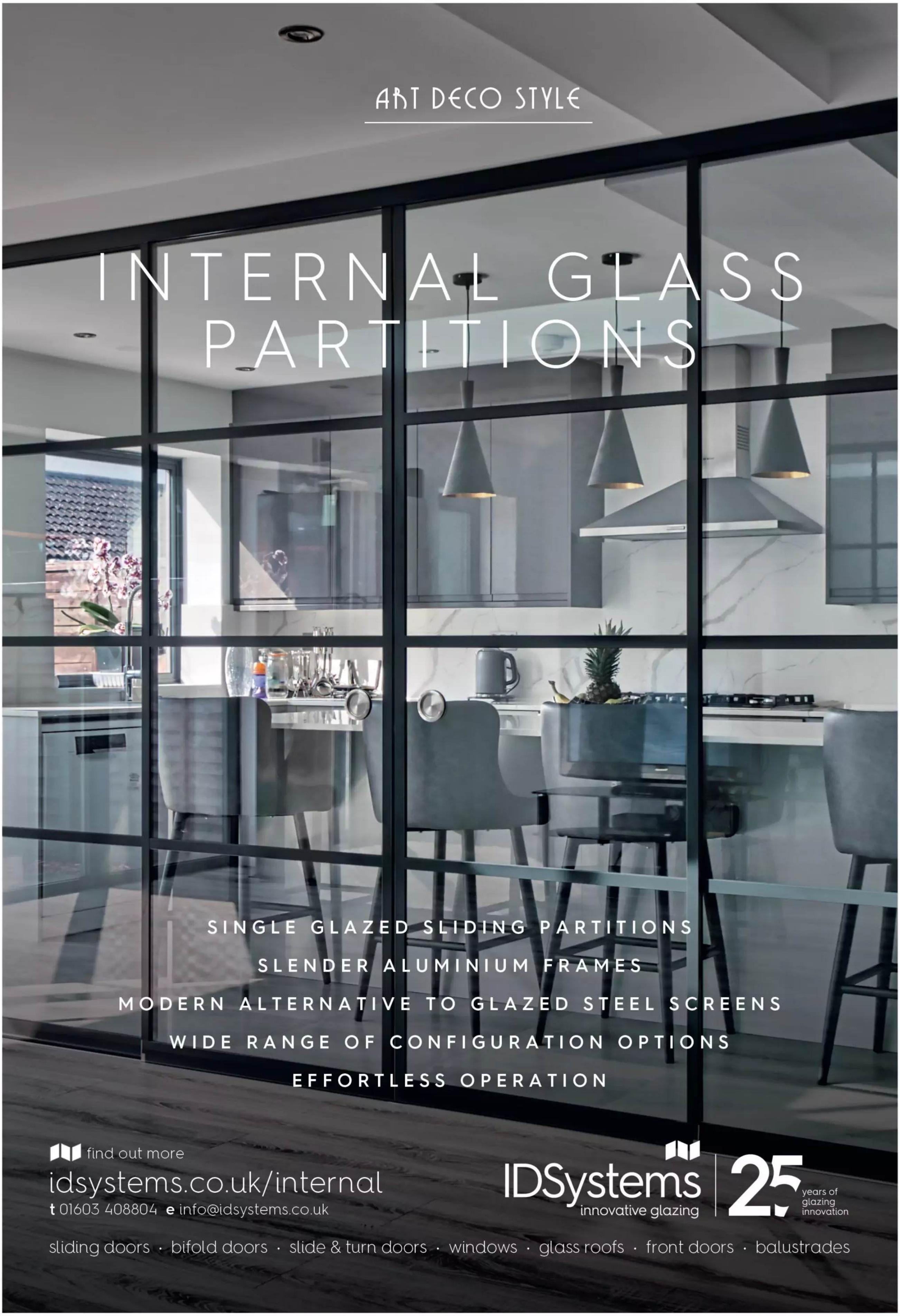
Ensuring access to natural light

Open plan designs can provide a good flow of daylight through the home and this is relatively simple to achieve. When you do consider some degree of subdivision, think about how natural light will enter the smaller areas that are furthest away from windows. Glazed internal screens can be a great solution, and these could be opaque or stained to allow light through, while preserving privacy between spaces. You could also introduce high level windows to allow light to enter from another room. This was a design feature of houses built in the 1960s where a toplight often featured over bedroom doors.

At Lapd Architects our virtual reality design visualisations are powerful enough that accurate light conditions can be modelled. As your design progresses, we can show you exactly how the lighting will look in the internal spaces. This proactive approach is much more useful than trying to retrofit a solution once on site with your builder because you find that the rooms are too dark.

OPINDER LIDDAR

Opinder Liddar is a Build It Award-winning designer and a director at Lapd Architects. He specialises in self build homes and renovation projects, and is a regular expert at Build It Live. For more information about Lapd Architects call 01865 407722 or visit www.lapdarchitects.co.uk



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INTERNAL GLAZING IDEAS

From doors and windows to striking atriums, **Erika Chaffey** showcases a range of solutions for maximising light flow and sightlines throughout your home

FRENCH+TYE

SEE IT THROUGH

Particularly useful in family homes, glazed doors enable you to keep an eye on what's happening in the next room, while working, cooking or relaxing in another. Part of a complete renovation project, Bradley Van Der Straeten Architects designed these full-height glazed doors that run over two storeys on both sides of the stairwell. Complete with warm timber frames, they provide cross views through all the living spaces and help to create the illusion of a fully open-plan layout. **(www.b-vds.co.uk)**

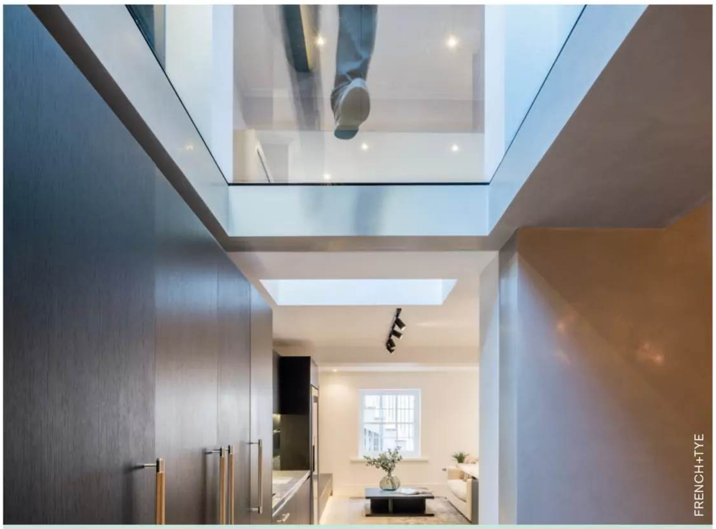
CLIVE SHERLOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

CRYSTAL CLEAR

Adding a touch of luxury, an open-air glazed atrium serves as a stunning centerpiece, bringing sunlight into the core of your home. It can strengthen that sought-after indoor-outdoor connection and create a bright, open and airy atmosphere internally. Opting for a rooflight overhead can provide a snug courtyard space to enjoy, whatever the weather. Paired with fixed frame glass, the SF75eco aluminium bifold doors from IDSystems start at £850 per m^2. **(www.idsystems.co.uk)**

ON THE OTHER SLIDE

Glazed sliders are ideal for maintaining an effective flow between rooms while saving on space. Frosted or tinted glass options can also help to ensure privacy where necessary. This eye-catching design from Hormann is made with a steel frame and features a statement exposed track and rollers for an industrial look. Available in a single or double leaf option, prices start from £4,365. **(www.hormann.co.uk)**


FRENCH+TYE

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

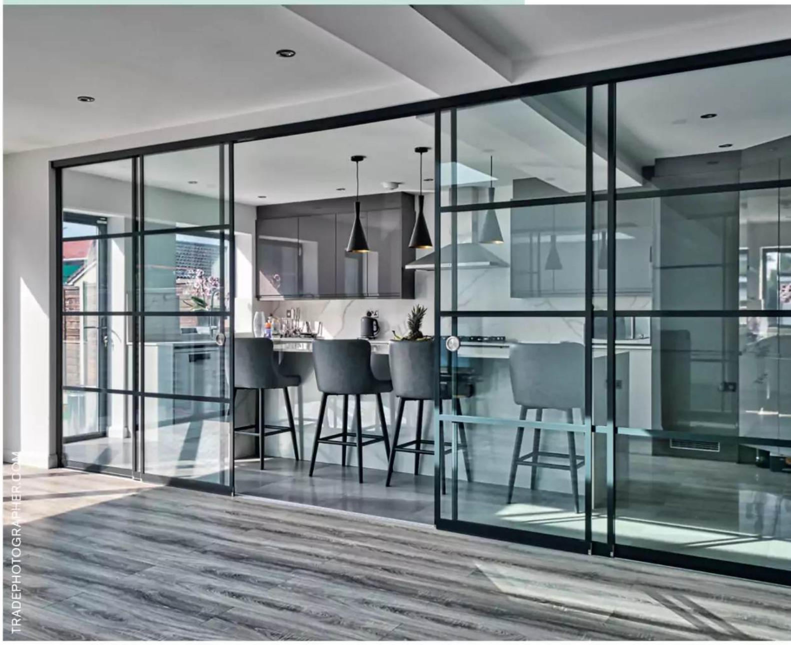
Low-maintenance, extremely durable and capable of withstanding heavy foot traffic, glass flooring can create the illusion of space and provide a stylish feature. Anti-slip finishes are available for added convenience, too. This two-storey rear extension project features a pair of structural glazed floors, flooding the whole home with light and adding a contemporary edge. IQ Glass' Invisio flooring costs from £2,500 per m^2. **(www.iqglassuk.com)**

SUNNY SIDE UP

A glazed balustrade helps to maintain the flow of natural light through your floorplan, without your staircase creating a visual barrier. Opting for invisible fixings on your banister, treads or structural elements, creates an ultra-sleek, seamless finish that gives the appearance of a floating flight. This elegant design features a glass balustrade with timber treads, allowing sunlight captured via glazing at the rear of the property to diffuse through to the front of the house. Bespoke staircases from Bisca start at £35,000. **(www.bisca.co.uk)**

BIG REVEAL

Fully-glazed room dividers serve as an eye-catching focal point in your interior scheme, and offer a practical solution for incorporating built-in flexibility. They allow you to section your rooms off or open them up into one large open plan area when needed, all without cutting off light flow between the two zones and beyond. With slim-line black frames and glazing bars, this six-screen centre-opening SF22 glass partition is priced from £1,200 per panel. **(www.idsystems.co.uk)**



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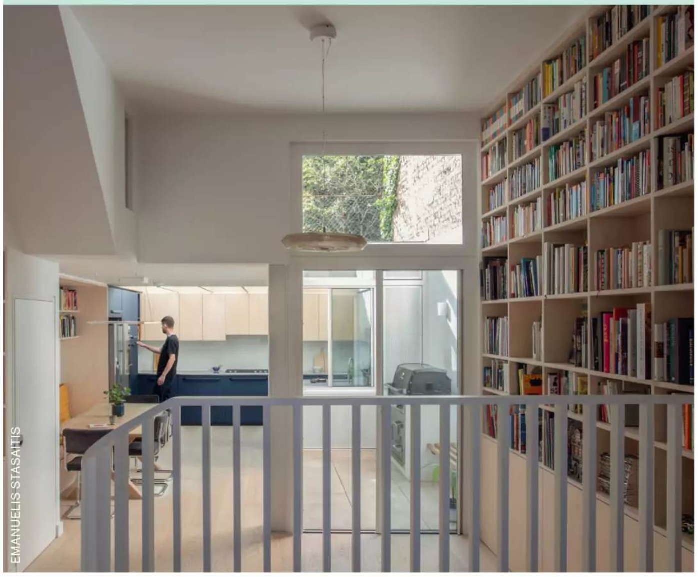
BRIGHT IDEA

In rooms with high ceilings, using glazing above your doors is a clever way to avoid dark corners and ensure light can reach into each corner of your home. For areas where fully-glazed doors or walls may not be appropriate for privacy reasons, an elevated window enhances light flow while preventing direct sightlines into your space. Part of an extension project by YARD Architects, this design includes a courtyard suntrap with an added glazed panel above the sliding doors to maximise light from above. **(www.yardarchitects.co.uk)**



EMANUELIS STASAITIS

MEGAN TAYLOR

SNEAK PEEK

Indoor windows offer excellent sightlines through your home. They help to divide up different areas while maintaining a strong connection between them, and making your floorplan feel more open. Double-glazed options bring the added benefit of great sound insulation to help establish separate zones, without sacrificing that visual link. Designed by Nimtim Architects, this quirky curved window connects the kitchen and living room areas, while the soft plywood structure provides a clear distinction between the two uses. **(www.nimtim.co.uk)**

What does it cost to retrofit UFH?

Installing underfloor heating in an existing property is a great space-saving way to increase comfort and efficiently warm your home. But what determines how much your setup will cost? Erika Chaffey investigates

Right: The Lo ProMax system offers an impressive heat output, making it well-suited to kitchens, conservatories and areas with large windows or glazed doors

Below: Wunda Rapid Response boards can be fitted by professional installers or competent DIYers alike. The system is controlled remotely using the discreet WundSmart thermostat, pictured here

Retrofitting underfloor heating (UFH) is an appealing and low-maintenance way to enhance your home's energy efficiency and contribute to comfortable, enjoyable living spaces. Plumbed-in, or wet, UFH systems are the most common retrofit solutions. These setups connect to your central heating system via a manifold and circulate warm water through flexible tubing beneath your floors, offering even warmth and freeing up wall space from radiators. UFH only requires water heated to approximately 35°C, while the flow temperature in radiators is around 60°C – typically making this solution cheaper to run.

While there are plenty of modern systems designed to make retrofitting UFH easier, installations in existing properties can bring challenges affecting costs, project timelines and complexity. Here, I break down the key considerations that can impact your spending and share how to ensure a cost-effective setup.

What does a standard retrofit project involve?

For a straightforward installation, you should look to budget for materials, labour and basic preparatory work. Quotes for standard projects typically assume a flat subfloor (like concrete or screed) in a single rectangular room with no major repairs needed before works begin. While the actual cost of your setup will depend on the exact system you specify, plus a range of variables, some of our expert suppliers estimate that you can expect to pay anywhere from £36-£120 per m², excluding VAT. "Additional installation costs can range between £224 and £720 for most projects, and up to £1,000 in London," says Tom Edmunds, general manager at Wunda Group PLC. "Have a chat with your UFH supplier about money-saving products or guarantees they may have available."

To save on labour and installation costs, consider systems designed for DIY. "If you can lay laminate flooring, you can install our boards," says Tom.

The amount of materials and piping required to fit your UFH will vary based on the product you specify and where it's located. So, it's vital to select the ideal solution to suit your home, preferences and budget.

Key factors affecting costs

The price of specifying and installing UFH will vary depending on a range of factors, from size and location to the condition of your property. Here are some essentials to consider when budgeting for your project:

1 Size of the system

While bigger setups naturally incur higher material and labour costs, they may benefit from economies of scale. "The larger the system, the cheaper the cost per m²," says James Lloyd, technical advisor and project manager at JK Floorheating. Smaller systems in compact rooms can sometimes result in disproportionately higher costs thanks to layout complexities and lack of floorspace.

"Larger spaces may require additional technical expertise, such as screeders or electricians, which can increase costs," says Jo Snell, retrofit expert at Nu-Heat. "Ensure your chosen system includes clear installation guides and technical support from the supplier to simplify work for follow-on trades and reduce their time on site."

2 Location

Certain rooms, such as bathrooms and kitchens, can make installations more complex. Bathrooms require precise pipe routing around fixtures like toilets and shower trays, while kitchens often have limited usable heated floor space due to cabinetry. "A well-designed system should accommodate all areas and factor in the placement of fixed units," says Jo. Early planning with an experienced supplier should ensure a smooth and efficient setup, regardless of location.

"Keeping the manifold as central to the property as possible, typically under the stairs or in the hallway, will result in the most efficient and cost-effective install," says James. While that may not be possible to achieve in small-scale renovations, it reduces the number of additional transient pipes required, maximising efficiency, limiting waste and keeping component costs down.

3 Energy efficiency of your home

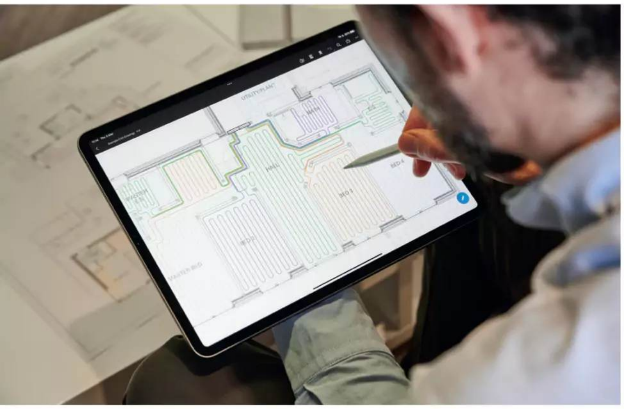
The energy performance of your existing property can significantly impact your UFH's efficiency. Poor insulation leads to heat loss and increased running costs – making it more difficult for your heating system to warm your home to a comfortable temperature.

"A good building fabric is essential for any type of heating system," says Jo. Older properties may require some energy-efficient upgrades to optimise performance, which adds to initial costs but reduces long-term heating expenses. Addressing structural issues like draughts or dampness may be necessary in period homes.

"Homes lose 10-20% of their heat through windows and external doors," says Tom. "Installing high-performance doors and glazing is one of the best long-term solutions to improve energy efficiency and cut bills." Specifying quality blinds or thermal lined curtains is a cost-effective solution that you can apply right away.

4 Insulation needs

Sufficient insulation beneath your UFH setup ensures heat is directed upwards rather than lost through the subfloor. Some systems come with varying levels of built-in insulation, but older homes may require additional measures for optimal efficiency. "If you're concerned about how your system will perform, consider getting a heat loss survey," says James. A local surveyor, or potentially your UFH supplier, will be able to carry this out and help determine if additional insulation is necessary. While this could add to your overall project costs, ensuring you have the right level of insulation in place is vital to the ongoing efficiency of your system.



TOP TIPS FOR A COST-EFFECTIVE PROJECT

While specifying and installing UFH can come with significant upfront costs, their efficiency, comfort, and long-term energy savings make them a worthwhile investment for many homes. Here's some top tips to help you stay on track and on budget:

Planning is key to keeping costs manageable. Speaking with reputable suppliers who can provide detailed breakdowns of costs, timelines and advise on the best solution for your home is essential. Factors like heat source compatibility (e.g. a heat pump or boiler) and the layout of your property should be considered during the early planning stage.

Incorporate installation into a wider renovation and combine it with other work, like retiling or redecorating, to save on labour and reduce disruption. Plus, consider incorporating energy-efficient upgrades as part of a wider home improvement project, to add to the effectiveness of your system and reduce overall running costs.

Consider long-term value and look beyond upfront costs to assess the benefits of specifying well-planned, high-quality setup to warm your home. Ask your supplier about the flow temperature and output of your system to ensure it's consistently affordable to run.

5 Floor build-up and coverings

In retrofit projects, low profile overlay systems, rather than a screed option that requires digging out the subfloor, are often easier to fit. "These lie over your existing flooring and can be as thin as 15mm, minimising floor height build-up," says Jo. "An overlay may be more expensive, but it's generally faster to install." Even with a small increase in your floor thickness, it's likely that you'll need to remove skirting boards to accommodate the new floor height.

The type of flooring you have, and whether the covering needs to be removed or altered, can affect both costs and project duration. Working with tiles or stone is more labour-intensive than installing on carpet or laminate, and thicker materials like hardwood may require some subfloor modifications.

A flat, clean floor covering is essential for smooth installation. "If there are any dips, holes, or undulations, we would recommend using a levelling screed," says Tom. Certain finishes like bitumen will need to be removed prior to installation. "It's always worth checking in with your flooring supplier to see what they recommend," advises James.

In period properties, you may wish to retain original features like floorboards, which requires careful removal and relaying. This can add time and negate potential savings. "We'd always recommend speaking to a qualified tradesperson who can look at the floor construction and advise you on whether this is feasible," says Jo.

Above: JK Floorheating systems are milled directly into your existing floor surface, reducing the need for additional insulation

Left: A Nu-Heat expert designing the pipework layout to ensure effective zoning

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ANDREW BEASLEY

THE INS AND OUTS OF REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS

Planning expert Martin Gaine reveals the range of benefits and key considerations when contemplating this route to your ideal home

As many self builders know, it's tricky to get planning permission for a new home on a vacant site in the countryside or the green belt. One of the best ways to get around this problem is to buy a plot with an existing property, and demolish it to make way for your dream home.

I'm taking you through the key planning considerations when it comes to replacement dwellings, highlighting the main pitfalls to avoid along the way, and providing some tips to improve your chances of success.

What is a replacement dwelling?

In planning jargon, this type of project involves the demolition of an existing house and its replacement with a new one on the same site. The new property doesn't have to be in the same part of the plot, the same size or design.

It's easier to get planning permission for this kind of project, rather than for a new home on a vacant area of land, because the residential use of the plot has already been established. The biggest obstacle self builders face when making an application in some areas, is that the council will object in principle to any new homes outside of existing built-up areas, and national planning policy rules out development in the green belt almost entirely.

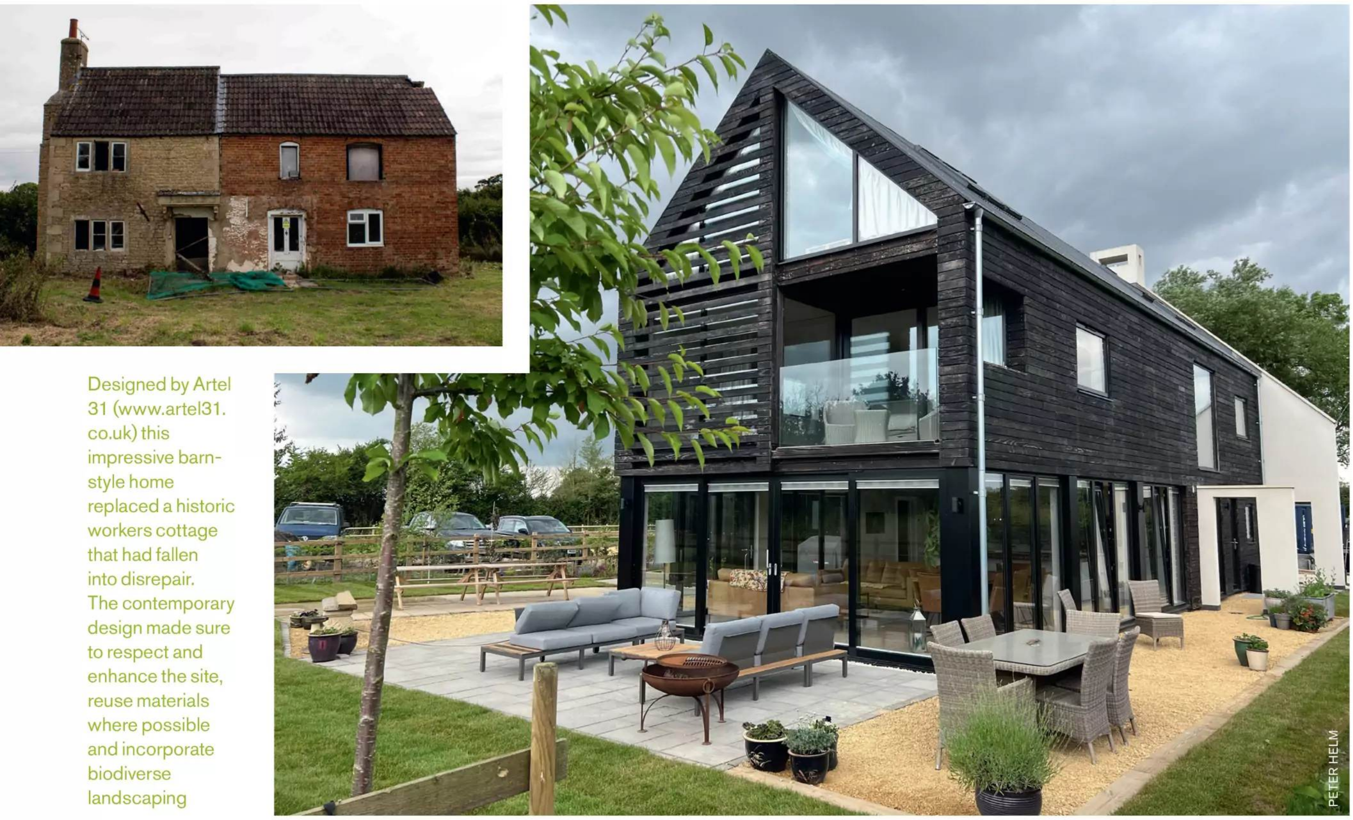
Even though the land already has residential use, there are still plenty of potential obstacles. The new build must comply with any other national and local planning policies relevant to the construction of a new home, including design, impact on neighbours and sustainability.

Size matters

In my experience, the most common reason for a replacement dwelling to be refused permission is because of its size, relative to the building it is replacing.

It's common for self builders to find a large plot for sale with a tiny bungalow on it and get carried away, imagining substituting it with a much more substantial family home. To their horror, they'll often find that the council will not

Above: Gregory Phillips Architects (www.gregoryphillips.com) designed this new build home to replace a 1960s bungalow. The contemporary single-storey property maximises views of the idyllic site



Designed by Artel 31 (www.artel31.co.uk) this impressive barn-style home replaced a historic workers cottage that had fallen into disrepair. The contemporary design made sure to respect and enhance the site, reuse materials where possible and incorporate biodiverse landscaping

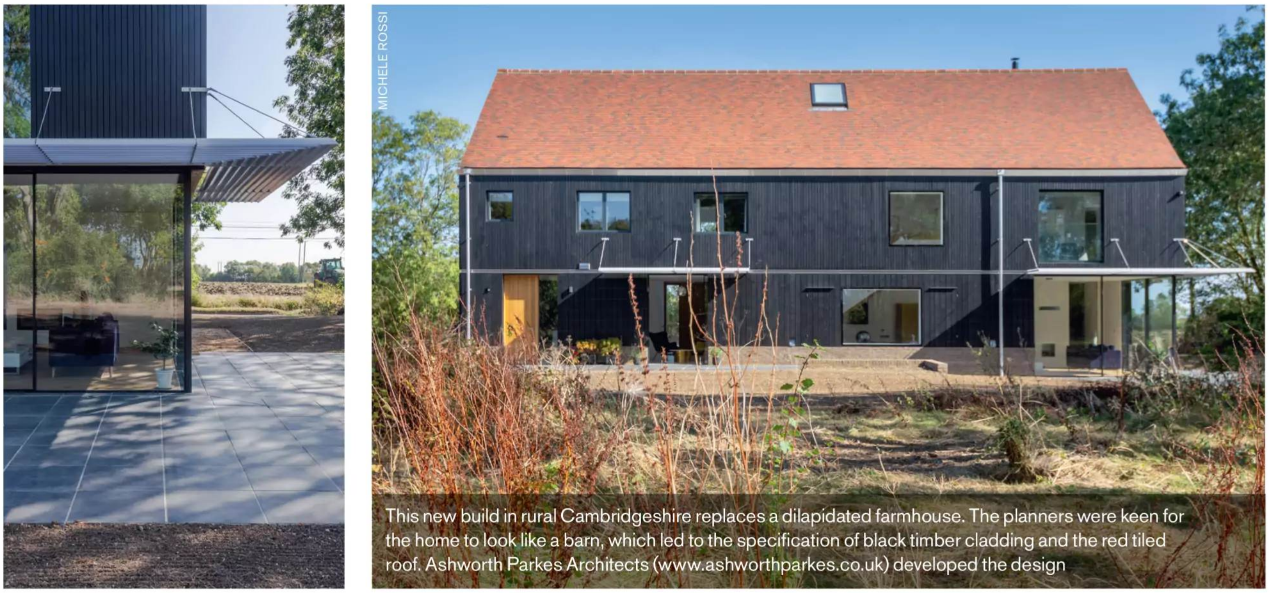
allow the new house to be significantly larger than the existing property on the site.

National planning policy states that replacement dwellings in the green belt should not be materially larger than the buildings they replace. Many councils adopt a similar stance on this type of project in the countryside (defined as anywhere outside of a settlement boundary): a significant increase in the size or bulk of your new home is likely to lead to a refusal.

Some local authorities have more specific guidelines. For example, that a replacement dwelling can be 30% bigger than the original home. It's important to check local policies (or get your architect or planning consultant to look) before committing to buying a property that you intend to knock down, or before preparing and submitting a planning application for your project.

Location is key

The second most common reason for refusal of a replacement dwelling application, is a change to its location within the site itself. The council will object to the re-siting of the property within the plot if it's much more prominent in its new location, especially if that is perceived to cause harm to the rural character of the



This new build in rural Cambridgeshire replaces a dilapidated farmhouse. The planners were keen for the home to look like a barn, which led to the specification of black timber cladding and the red tiled roof. Ashworth Parkes Architects (www.ashworthparkes.co.uk) developed the design

EXTEND AND REMODEL, OR DEMOLISH AND REBUILD?

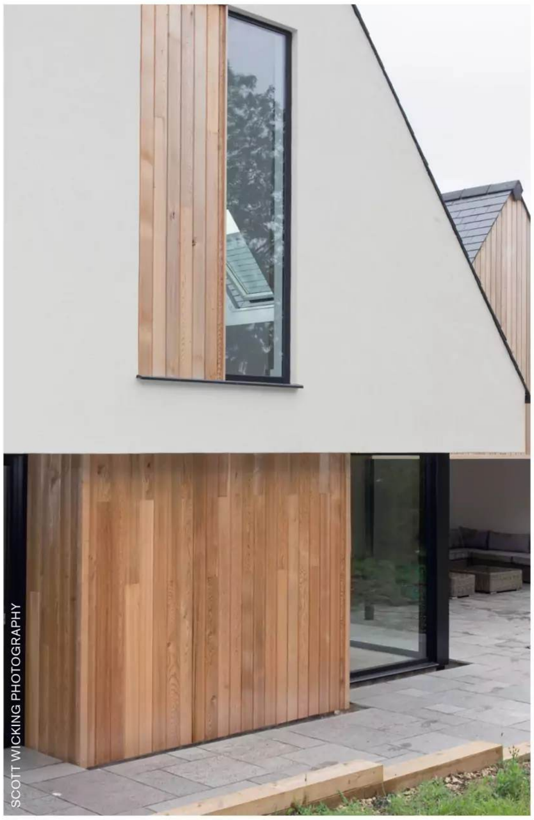
Self builders often agonise over whether they should extend their existing home to achieve the extra living space they need or demolish the whole thing so they can start from scratch. Every situation is different of course, but here are the key considerations:

Speed Building a new addition and remodelling is usually much quicker, because the existing building is left standing. Obtaining planning permission is also easier and therefore swifter, because applications for extensions trigger fewer policies than those for entirely new dwellings.

Cost Extending is generally cheaper – but a replacement dwelling can be more cost-effective in the long run if the existing house is in poor condition and needs a lot of upgrading, or if the extension and remodelling are large-scale (and almost equivalent to rebuilding). New homes may also be more energy efficient and have lower ongoing operating costs, saving money on bills down the line. Plus, self builders do not usually pay VAT on construction works for a new dwelling (but do for extensions). New build homes will also sometimes command higher prices when sold.

Sustainability Reusing an existing building is typically more sustainable, as long as retrofitting is practical and affordable. However, a new build home could be more sustainable over its lifetime if more energy efficient.

Personal preference This may ultimately be what it comes down to. If your existing house is historic, particularly beautiful or has sentimental value, you won't want to lose it. If it's not aesthetically pleasing as it stands, has an awkward layout, is dark and damp, or is in the wrong part of the site, demolition may be the way to go in order to get the home you want.



SCOTT WICKING PHOTOGRAPHY

Above: Located next to a grade I listed church in rural Yorkshire, Ian Hazard Architects (www.ianhazard.com) replaced a post-war bungalow with this super energy-efficient home that slots beautifully into its surroundings thanks to a muted material palette

setting or if the site is in a sensitive location, such as an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB).

It may also object if the proposed area is too close to neighbours, affecting their living conditions, or if the new location is in a flood zone or closer to protected trees, for example. It's usually easiest to build your new home on the site of the old one.

Maintaining rural character

Clients often come to me for advice after a council planning officer has objected to the design of their new home. Local authorities are reluctant to grant permission for the replacement of a small traditional cottage with a larger, contemporary building that uses modern materials. Grand designs are much harder to get planning permission for than it might appear from the TV show.

It's important that your proposal relates well to the site and its neighbours, respects the character of the area and makes appropriate use of materials. The planners overwhelmingly prefer designs that complement their surroundings, rather than those that make a statement.

Sustainability & biodiversity

The planners will be keen for your new house to meet their adopted standards in terms of its environmental performance. If there could be protected species, such as bats or great crested newts, in the house or on the wider site you'll need to carry out and submit a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) and consider any recommendations it makes. The planners may expect you to make biodiversity improvements (though self builders are exempt from the national Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime that was introduced recently).

As with any planning applications, you'll also be required to commission specialist reports for new dwellings in a flood zone, on land that might be contaminated or where there are trees, especially those protected by a tree preservation order (TPO).

Beware of abandonment

As I've explained, the advantage of applying for a replacement dwelling is that the land has an established residential use. If a house is derelict or has been uninhabited for a long time, the council can argue that it's been abandoned and the residential use has been lost.

Abandonment is a tricky concept in planning terms and whether a building or a use has been abandoned is a matter of judgement – taking into account the physical condition of the building, the length of non-use, and the intentions of the owner. If you're considering buying a site with a house that is in disrepair and hasn't been lived in for many years, take professional advice from a planning consultant to establish whether the use persists.

MARTIN GAINE

Martin Gaine runs planning consultancy Just Planning (www.just-planning.co.uk). A former case officer, he has experience on both sides of the planning divide and now specialises in helping homeowners win consent at appeal. He is the author of How to Get Planning Permission: An Insider's Secrets.

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Darlington BS	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	85%	80%	6.49%	DPP & Building Regs
Furness BS	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	80%	80%	6.24%	DPP & Building Regs
Furness BS (Green Build)	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	80%	80%	6.49%	DPP & Building Regs
Hinckley & Rugby BS	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	90%	80%	7.14%	DPP & Building Regs
Mansfield BS	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	85%	80%	6.40%	DPP & Building Regs
Newcastle BS	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	90%	90%	6.80%	DPP & Building Regs
Tipton & Coseley	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	85%	75%	6.19%	DPP & Building Regs
Vernon BS	★	SB & CB	Advance	0345 223 4647	85%	80%	7.05%	DPP & Building Regs
Bath BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	95%	85%	6.64%	Foundations
Buckinghamshire BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	80%	80%	6.35%	Foundations
Chorley BS	★	SB &CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	50%	70%	6.05%	Foundations
Darlington BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	70%	70%	6.29%	Foundations
Furness BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	70%	70%	6.04%	Foundations
Furness BS (Green Build)	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	80%	80%	6.20%	Foundations
Hinckley & Rugby BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	90%	80%	7.14%	Foundations
Mansfield BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	80%	80%	6.04%	Foundations
Newcastle BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	90%	90%	6.60%	Foundations
Stafford Railway BS	★	SB & CB	Arrears	0345 223 4647	85%	75%	6.40%	Foundations
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Saffron BS		SB & CB	Arrears	0333 015 2970	75%	75%	6.44%	Flexible
Suffolk BS		SB	Arrears	0330 123 0723	80%	80%	5.95%	Foundations

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GETTING RELIABLE QUOTES

Above: Clear communication and thorough documentation, such as detailed drawings and specifications, are key to obtaining reliable and comparable quotes

Below: Bear in mind that renovation projects can often uncover hidden work, making accurate estimates and flexibility critical to managing unexpected costs

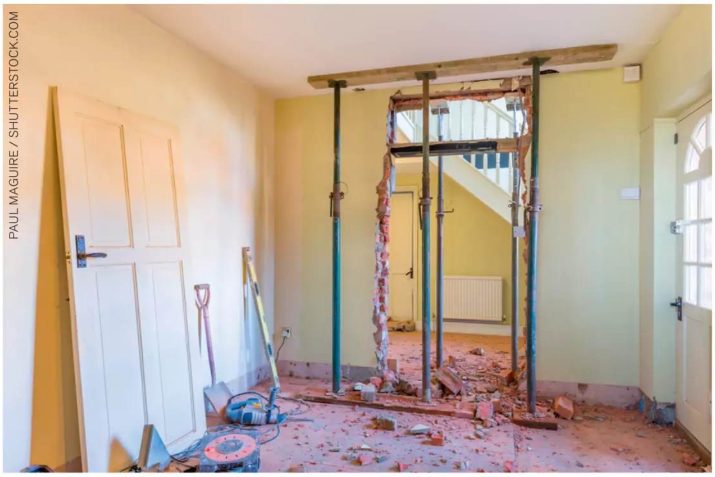
For building projects, navigating the maze of estimates, quotes and varying prices can feel slightly overwhelming. Mike Hardwick's comprehensive guide will help you to take control of the process, and avoid making costly mistakes

Getting quotes for anything from a full house build to an individual trade is a time consuming but necessary part of your project. Simply accepting the first price from a general builder is risky, as quotes vary for many reasons. There will always be cost variations for the same work, for new houses and extensions. In this article, I'm explaining how to get the best value for money.

Estimate or quote?

Many people confuse estimates and quotes, but the distinction is crucial. The former is an approximate calculation of what a job might cost, which is often subject to change as the work unfolds. This approach is common in renovation projects, where the full scope of the project may not be immediately apparent.

In contrast to this, a fixed-price quote is a firm agreement, which is based on a detailed plan or specification. If no changes are made, the quoted price is what you'll pay for the work. However, any alterations to the agreed-upon scope will incur additional costs, often referred to as 'extra over' charges. Understanding this difference will help to ensure that you're prepared for potential price adjustments and helps you budget more effectively for your project overall.



PAUL MAGUIRE / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Being detailed

The more information you can give, the more accurate your quote will be. It's better to know the likely cost of the job at the start of the scheme than to suddenly find that unaccounted for extras have been added to the bill. If the full extent of the work wasn't made clear in the original tendering process, these additional costs can make the initial quote, and therefore your budget, meaningless. Prepare a clear statement of the work you are expecting to be completed and include that with the drawings submitted.

Getting realistic quotes

When embarking on a major project, like a self build or renovation, one of the first steps is to establish a basic idea of the likely overall cost. Your architect or designer may provide this service, but be aware that early-stage estimates tend to be rough, as they often lack details on the materials and finishes. Many professionals rely on build cost tables found in self build publications, but keep in mind that these figures may be outdated or overly optimistic, especially given the sharp rise in material prices over the past five years.

A more accurate method is to use an estimating service, such as that offered by Build It elsewhere in this publication. Using your plans and a series of algorithms, a basic price for materials and labour can be established

WHY DO QUOTES VARY SO MUCH?

When requesting quotes from multiple builders for the same project, you'll often get varying responses due to factors like:

DEMAND: In a rising market, where builders and tradesmen are sought after, some clients are willing to pay above the standard rate. This allows builders to set higher prices, confident that if you decline, someone else will accept. Conversely, during a downturn in the construction industry, work becomes scarcer, leading to lower prices as tradespeople are often willing to accept reduced margins to stay afloat. Interestingly, this makes a recession an opportune time for self builders to undertake projects.

SINGLE QUOTES: Builders are aware that some clients will only seek a single price, often from a trusted local firm with a solid reputation. If the firm is really busy, they can comfortably set a high price to set a significant profit, or they might subcontract the job to another builder, while taking a share of the profit. If their offer is declined, they'll likely have other projects lined up.

THE LOSS LEADER: Understandably, we are drawn to cheap quotes, but beware. Builders know that once they have started a job, it is rare for them to be kicked off it, and putting in a low quote gets their foot in the door. As the job progresses, 'extras' will appear for work not originally included. Before long, the initial price can become a distant memory, with costs escalating beyond your budget. Such offers often include vague, one-line prices lacking detail. Distinguish between low prices and real value. If an offer is significantly lower, proceed cautiously. Request a detailed breakdown to ensure nothing is missing, and insist on references. This could signal potential issues, so stay vigilant.

RISK: Building a simple house, comprising four walls and a slab-sided roof is not too difficult. Big builders construct these designs on a daily basis, as they are quick, easy and low-risk, maximising their profit margins. However, a cutting-edge, contemporary eco-home with cantilevered balconies, or using new structural systems presents additional risk, which UK builders will factor into their prices. If something goes wrong and requires additional work to remedy it, the builder's profit margin won't be affected – this risk is built into the higher price. Simply put, complex designs will inevitably come with higher construction costs.

Krystelle and Ed Floyd-Wass were determined to stick to their budget, so wanted to find a builder that would be mindful of costs and help them to reuse materials wherever possible. They tendered to three firms, and Krystelle visited some of their past projects with her architect. They chose Tracos Building Services, who were happy to package up the project costs into phases and who had worked with the architect previously

which could then be used as a yardstick against other quotes. The gold standard for accurate cost estimation is a full quantity surveyor (QS) appraisal. While not cheap, this approach provides highly detailed costings for your build by itemising all materials and labour required. A comprehensive QS report serves as an excellent foundation for tendering, ensuring no vital aspects of the project are overlooked in a builder's quote (excluding the pricing itself, of course). Though it might seem like a significant up front expense, investing in a QS appraisal can save you considerable money in the long term – it will highlight any disproportionately high elements in the quotes you receive.

I've lost count of the number of times I've asked for quotes to be broken down into a particular format so I can isolate the various works and compare 'apples with apples', only to receive a different format in every reply. It can be incredibly frustrating to decipher what is covered in each quote, as every builder – or their QS – tends to have their own way of presenting information. While you can request that they send you quotes in your preferred

ADELINA ILIEV

DAVID BARBOUR

Above & right: As they were living far away from their project, the tendering process was key for the Walkers. A local main contractor was recommended to them, who had successfully completed many schemes in the area. Their designers, Fife Architects, managed the scheme and checked quotes to ensure everything ran smoothly

format, there's no guarantee they'll comply. If they don't, at least you'll be prepared for the challenge!

Shop around

The common advice is to obtain three quotes for every aspect of your project. While this makes sense in theory, it can be time-consuming and often reveals that prices within a tight market tend to align closely. In some cases, if a quote seems fair and you're satisfied with the builder's reputation, there's little harm in accepting it. Similarly, if you have a trusted local tradesperson known for their reliability and reasonable pricing, it's likely they will offer you a competitive deal – especially since word travels fast if someone treats clients poorly.

That said, it's still wise to secure between three and five quotes for larger jobs that involve general builders. For individual trades, especially when you lack any personal connections or recommendations, obtaining at least three quotes remains a really smart strategy to ensure you're making an informed decision.

A word of caution: while it might be tempting to request a large number of quotes, keep in mind that builders often ask how many others are bidding for the job. Be careful of how you respond to this question. If you say there are 10 other builders in the running, they might see the chance of getting the work as so remote that it's not worth replying. Don't forget that putting a quote for a self build together is time consuming and potentially expensive, especially if they have to hire a QS, so they need to have a realistic chance of getting the project if they are going to bid.

Nobody works for free

Finally, while we would all love to get the lowest possible quotes, remember that everyone who works on your project is there to earn a decent wage. It's how the industry works, so you need to accept it. The key is to complete the entire project within a budget that is both realistic and well-planned – ideally one that ensures the finished home is worth more on the open market than it cost to develop in the first place.

Depending on how the general economy is doing, a builder might make 20% profit on your scheme, sometimes less, sometimes more. During a recession, it's not uncommon for builders to price jobs with minimal or even no profit margin, simply to secure work and keep their business afloat. If you can get your house built within the budget you have set, who cares who made what profit? Ultimately, you will have the house you want at the price you wanted to pay, and the chances are it's already worth more than it cost to construct.

MIKE HARDWICK

Mike Hardwick has become a well-respected self build expert since completing his own dream home. He is general manager of the National Custom & Self Build Association.

START SEARCHING TODAY FOR YOUR PERFECT PLOT...

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PlotBrowser
from BuildIt magazine

Ask the EXPERTS

Essential advice on your problems with building, budgeting, DIY & planning from the most experienced names in the self build industry

PLANNING
Martin Gaine runs planning consultancy Just Planning (www.just-planning.co.uk). A former case officer, he has experience on both sides of the planning divide and now specialises in helping homeowners win consent at appeal. He is the author of How to Get Planning Permission: An Insider's Secrets.

FINANCE
Rachel Pyne is director of financial services at BuildStore (www.buildstore.co.uk). She has worked in self build finance for over 10 years and deals with a diverse portfolio of lenders across the whole market, as well as on exclusive self build and renovation mortgage products.

SUSTAINABILITY
Nigel Griffiths specialises in sustainable construction and eco-renovation and was the author of the Haynes Eco House Manual. He advises UK government on retrofit programmes and inspects renewable heat installations on behalf of Ofgem. You can chat to Nigel at the Build It Live shows.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Chris Batesmith is Build It's content director. He project managed Build It's real-life Self Build Education House from conception to completion. Find out more at **www.buildit.co.uk/ourhouse**

PERIOD PROPERTIES
Alan Tierney is a period property and conservation specialist. He ran an historic building consultancy, offering hands-on advice to heritage homeowners, but is now focused on renovating yet another property: Old Barnstaple House.

DESIGN
Opinder Liddar is a director at Lapd Architects (www.lapdarchitects.co.uk). The practice specialises in residential projects from extensions to new builds, making him the ideal person to answer all your home design questions.

VAT RECLAIMS
Kathy Tisdale runs Self Build VAT Reclaims (www.selfbuildvatreclaims.com), providing a professional VAT reclaim service which enables self builders and converters to focus on their project.

DESIGN

Is my quote for construction costs accurate?

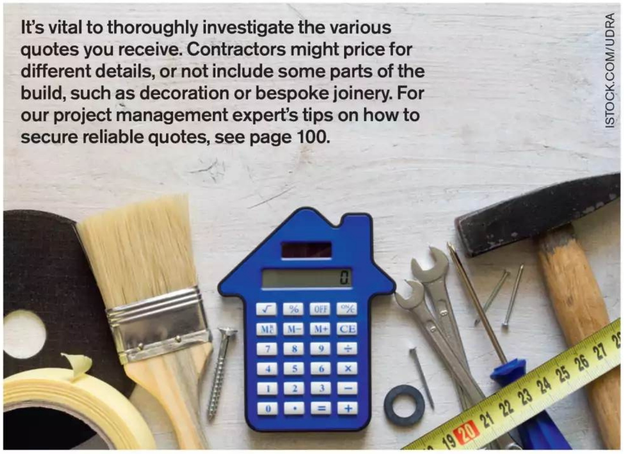
I'm planning to build a luxury new home with an architect. The internal floorplan will be 330m² and we have been quoted nearly £5,000 per m² for the fully finished design. How can I tell if this is reasonable?

With any construction project, you can be quoted a wide range of prices from contractors because of the different specifications they can build to. From my experience with residential schemes, the amount you have been given would reflect a very high specification, so it would be best to double check what type of finish you and your architect are hoping to achieve, before you start to search for any more builders or estimates.

Pricing per square metre is only really useful for initial discussions. I would suggest, once you have a clear scheme, that you then get a more accurate measured valuation carried out for your project. Build It offers a cost estimating service (www.self-build.co.uk/estimate) that will help to identify where your money is being spent in relation to the design you have. This will give you more of an insight into what you are allocating to each part of your build, and what makes up the final figure.

A quantity surveyor may also offer a useful way to reviewing figures, especially on a high-value project where their advice may well save you back their fee. On the other hand, you can always start to negotiate directly with a contractor if you feel comfortable with proceeding with just one quotation.

The only way you'll know if you have got the best price is by putting your project out to competitive tender. I would suggest that you agree a shortlist of contractors and wait to see what prices come back. Make sure that the firms you select can provide the level of specification and project management you want. I believe that it is not just the lowest fee you have to consider when you appoint your contractor, but how they will handle sticking to a designated timeframe and control the budget for your build. It is worth paying just a little bit extra to make sure that you are going to get good service.



It's vital to thoroughly investigate the various quotes you receive. Contractors might price for different details, or not include some parts of the build, such as decoration or bespoke joinery. For our project management expert's tips on how to secure reliable quotes, see page 100.

ISTOCK.COM/UDRA

VAT RECLAIMS

Is my project eligible for a reduced rate of VAT?

We purchased a probate property back in June 2024. It had been vacant since December 2022. The project had to be paused due to some planning complications, with only minimal renovation work having been completed so far. We are now in the process of seeking planning permission for two proposed extensions. Could we class the project as a two-stage renovation? As such, would it be possible to claim the 5% VAT rate on the extensions?

Your renovation will be covered by the two-year rule, as set out in the HMRC 708 VAT Notice Building and Renovations, Section 8. In your situation, where the property has been left vacant for the required period, VAT registered trades who carry out the building works are able to reduce the standard 20% rate down to 5%. Unfortunately, there is no mechanism for you to reclaim this 5% – but 15% is still a great saving!

You will need to supply evidence to your builders that the property has not been lived in during these two years immediatley before your trades start work. This can be easily obtained from the electoral roll and council tax records, or the utilities company. If you get supporting documents from the empty property office at your local council, then you would not need to provide any further evidence to your contractors.

MULTISHOOTER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Houses that have been left abandoned for over two years could qualify for a reduced VAT rate on renovation and refurbishment works to make them suitabe for modern living

It is also important to note that if you are thinking of carrying out any of the construction works and purchasing materials from your local builders' merchants yourself, that these suppliers do not have the facility to reduce the VAT. Therefore, this would mean you will be required to pay the standard 20% rate on these services.

PERIOD PROPERTIES

How can I treat and prevent wormwood in external timbers?

My home is made from timber, constructed on beams set atop concrete pillars. I've had issues with external damp and wormwood affecting one of these beams, but it's hard to determine the extent of the damage to the sapwood. What's the best way to address this?

In normal conditions external timbers should cope perfectly well. Although it can depend on the period and quality of construction, in general you should be able to rely on the timber having been selected to incorporate sufficient heartwood to perform its structural function. Sapwood deterioration from woodworm is impossible to control in an external environment, but should cause no more than superficial damage.

Where you may find a problem is when your timber becomes excessively damp and therefore is unable to dry out sufficiently. Long-term persistant wetness can enable fungal decay and/or death watch beetle attack of the structural heartwood. If this is the case, it is essential to address the cause of the excessive wetness. Common issues tend to include leaking gutters, poor building detailing and if any impermeable materials are in contact with the timber. Once the timber has returned to normal conditions and, most importantly, can regularly dry out completely, any decay should naturally die out.

The timber should be checked to assess the extent of the damage by probing for areas of softness, and then performing localised repairs by cutting back to sound wood. There is no need to remove any sound timber beyond the damaged zone.

SUSTAINABILITY

Can I have some advice on the BUS grant?

I'm in the process of specifying my new home and I'm keen to include underfloor heating (UFH) in the project. My building manufacturer has suggested that, because I'm using a SIPs superstructure with MVHR, I won't need UFH upstairs and should just install a system in the ground floor areas. However, when talking to a UFH and air source heat pump supplier, I was advised that I would need additional heating in my first floor rooms to qualify for the boiler upgrade scheme (BUS), as 90% of the home needs to be heated to secure the grant. Is this the case?

My advice is usually to err on the safe side, and to lay the pipework for radiators upstairs while the house is being built, as this is easy and cheap to do. If you find that the heat doesn't reach some areas above or perhaps you want a bathroom to be warmer, then it is simple to connect a small radiator later on.

In terms of qualifying for the BUS, you should not be disqualified if the whole house is being heated by the downstairs system. I was unable to find any reference to a 90% clause in the regulations or in the BUS Guidance to Property Owners (V4). I suppose the idea behind such a clause would be to stop people claiming a grant and then having two thirds of the building being heated by a fossil fuel boiler!

I spoke to Ofgem, and they confirmed that there is no such requirement in the regulations. However, they would expect the installer to take the proposed distribution system (and its extent) into account in their heat loss calculations.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Send all your self build, renovation and conversion questions to buildit@castlemedia.co.uk or visit www.self-build.co.uk/question
Please note all correspondence may be published in the magazine

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FIND YOUR DREAM BUILDING PLOT

PlotBrowser.com is a 100% free-to-use plot and property finder, packed with 1,000s of home building opportunities. Here's a taster of the fantastic self build plots, renovation properties and conversions currently for sale near you

PlotBrowser.com is the latest addition to Build It's series of powerful project tools (**www.buildit.co.uk/tools**) designed to put you on the path to self build success.

Updated daily, this is your dedicated resource for finding genuine self build land and renovation opportunities. You'll find 1,000s of plots and properties to view nationwide, and each listing features the site details, photos, guide price and sellers' contact information – including details such as whether the plot or property is being sold at auction and, if so, when.

Crucially, we've done a big part of the plot-hunting job for you: all our plots already have either outline or full planning permission in place, so you won't have to waste your time looking at duds that might never gain consent to build.

What's more, we've sourced the planning reference for you, so that you can quickly and easily identify the current planning consent on the relevant local authority's website. This will arm you with a full understanding of the site's planning history and what's been permitted, so you can gauge whether the plot can support the kind of house you'd like to create.

The following pages are a sample of the plots, renovations and conversion projects available on **PlotBrowser.com** this month.

GOT A PLOT TO SELL?
Head to **PlotBrowser.com** and register as a seller to list your plot for free.

PlotBrowser from BuildIt magazine

START YOUR PLOT SEARCH

To find more plots with planning permission across the UK, and get free notifications of new opportunities based on your personal criteria, sign up today at **www.PlotBrowser.com**

ENGLAND

TYPES OF BUILDING PLOT

New homes can be built on a range of sites and knowing about the opportunities can help you spot land with potential. Here are the key options:

BROWNFIELD SITES

This refers to previously developed land that is or was once occupied by a permanent structure. Government policy supports the provision of new housing in such locations and, on a practical level, services are likely to be in place.

DEMOLISH & REPLACE

A type of brownfield opportunity where you could knock down a building, such as an old bungalow, and construct a new home in its place. It's often more cost-effective than a renovation as VAT can be reclaimed on a new build project.

EDGE-OF-SETTLEMENT

Depending on the maps in the relevant council's Local Plan, this kind of site may or may not fall within existing built-up area boundaries. Generally, policies allow development within this zone, but control it very strictly outside. Any undeveloped land, known as greenfield, will typically only support housing to serve the needs of agriculture, replacement dwellings and some infill.

INFILL PLOTS

Many councils define this as a small gap between an otherwise built-up frontage or group of houses. Infilling is usually allowed within settlements' development boundaries, and sometimes outside of these. Gaining consent will be more difficult in zones such as conservation areas.

GARDENS

Contrary to the 'backland development' headlines of a few years ago, planners still allow schemes on garden plots, especially in places that are considered to be built-up. You may even be lucky enough to have a large space that could work as a viable site or know someone who is willing to negotiate a fair price.

SERVICED PLOTS

Land that's ready to build on, with utilities, highway access and potentially other infrastructure already in place, as well as at least outline planning consent. This route offers more certainty over early-stage costs.

BERKSHIRE

NEWBURY
Bartholomew Street
Plot of land with planning consent for a pair of one-bedroom semi-detached bungalows in the town centre.
Guide price: £169,999
Planning: West Berkshire Council 23/02266/FUL
Contact: Winkworth 01635 552552 newbury@winkworth.co.uk
Plot ID: 136360

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BOURNE END
Marlow Road
Detached two- to three-bedroom house. The adjacent three-bedroom property has permitted development for a 18m^2 kitchen extension, fourth bedroom over the garage and loft conversion to principle suite.
Guide price: £350,000
Planning: Wycombe District Council 24/05670/FUL
Contact: Private seller 07785 522595 johngarry@btinternet.com
Plot ID: 136255

CHALFONT ST. PETER
Ellis Avenue
Plot with consent for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of a detached five-bedroom house and double attached garage.
Guide price: £1,295,000
Planning: Chiltern District Council PL/24/2471/FA
Contact: Savills 01494 725636 amersham@savills.com
Plot ID: 136272

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

BURWELL
Hythe Lane
Building plot with permission for the construction of a two-bedroom detached house in a popular village.
Guide price: £165,000
Planning: East Cambridgeshire District Council 24/00104/ful
Contact: Cheffins 01638 663228 newmarket@cheffins.co.uk
Plot ID: 136313

LODE
Millards Lane
Plot with full planning permission granted for either a two-bedroom detached bungalow or two semi-detached, three-bedroom homes.
Guide price: £325,000
Planning: East Cambridgeshire District Council 24/00574/FUL, 23/00060/FUL
Contact: Bovingdons 07500 115321 info@thebovingdons.co.uk
Plot ID: 136260

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

CONINGTON
School Lane
A building plot with outline planning permission granted for the construction of a four-bedroom detached dwelling.
Guide price: £150,000
Planning: South Cambridgeshire District Council 24/02831/OUT
Contact: Peter Lane & Partners 01480 414800 huntingdon@peterlane.co.uk

MARCH
Limetree Close
Plot for development on the outskirts of March with planning for a substantial five-bedroom detached house with single garage.
Guide price: £140,000
Planning: Fenland District Council F/YR16/0436/O
Contact: Haart 01908 753096 milton.keynes@haart.co.uk
Plot ID: 136332

YAXLEY
Askews Lane
Plot of land with detailed planning permission for a detached three-bedroom dwelling of nearly 1,800ft^2.
Guide price: £275,000
Planning: Huntingdonshire District Council 22/01422/FUL
Contact: Pelham James 01572 497070 team@pelhamjames.co.uk
Plot ID: 136413

CHESHIRE

CREWE
Middlewich Street
Plot with planning granted for two semi-detached, two-storey houses.
Guide price: £89,950
Planning: Cheshire East Council 23/2158 C
Contact: Baker, Wynne and Wilson 01270 625214 enquiries@bakerwynneandwilson.com
Plot ID: 136321

MORETON
Sycamore Avenue
Plot of land measuring approx 242m^2 with planning permission for the erection of a three-bedroom detached property.
Guide price: £40,000
Planning: Wirral Council App/23/01425
Contact: Auction House London 020 7625 9007 info@auctionhouselondon.co.uk
Plot ID: 136378

CORNWALL

LISKEARD
Bodgara Way
Building plot with outline planning in place for a detached two-bedroom dwelling with off-street parking in a popular residential area.
Guide price: £45,000
Planning: Cornwall Council PA23/04421
Contact: eXp UK - South West 020 3641 1316 adam.day@exp.uk.com
Plot ID: 136394

NEWQUAY
Black Cross
Two large building plots with consent for a family home with a garden and parking, set in an idyllic location.
Guide price: £135,000
Planning: Cornwall Council PA24/01082
Contact: Miller Countrywide 01637 871242 newquay@millercountrywide.co.uk
Plot ID: 136363

THREEMILESTONE
Victoria Road
Land plot with conditional planning conent for the construction of a single-storey dwelling in a quiet bungalow development.
Guide price: £125,000
Planning: Cornwall Council PA23/02495

Contact: Northwood 01872 703928 truro@northwooduk.com
Plot ID: 136305

TINTAGEL
Bossaney Road
Building plot with conditional planning permission granted for a substantial three-bedroom dwelling. The site is tucked away and overlooks nearby fields with a distant sea view.
Guide price: £195,000
Planning: Cornwall Council E1/2006/01714
Contact: View Property 01566 706706 sales@viewproperty.org.uk
Plot ID: 136268

COUNTY DURHAM
LANCHESTER
The Pastures
Plot with detailed permission for the construction of a large four-bedroom house with garage and gardens.
Guide price: £225,000
Planning: Durham County Council DM/22/02669/rm
Contact: Stuart Edwards 01913 848440 enquiries@stuartedwards.com
Plot ID: 136302

CUMBRIA
LITTLE ORTON
The Gables
Plot of 0.325 acres with full planning permission granted for a four-bedroom detached family home with a large south-facing garden.
Guide price: £175,000
Planning: Carlisle City Council 23/0143
Contact: P F K - Land Agency 01768 866611 carlisle@pfk.co.uk
Plot ID: 136270

DERBYSHIRE
BELPER
Kilburn Lane
Building plot with outline planning permission for a detached home, situated adjacent to open countryside, enjoying far reaching views.
Guide price: £130,000
Planning: Amber Valley Borough Council AVA/2022/0214
Contact: Boxall Brown & Jones 01773 880788 Belper@boxallbrownandjones.co.uk
Plot ID: 136347

CRICH
Park Head
Land with full planning permission to build a residential dwelling. Within the site there is currently is a garage/annexe scheduled to be removed as part of the proposed development.
Guide price: £550,000
Planning: Amber Valley Borough Council ava/2024/0147
Contact: Fidler & Taylor 01629 580228 simon.croft@fidler-taylor.co.uk
Plot ID: 136294

NETHER HEAGE
Ridgeway Lane
Plot of land with fully detailed planning permission granted for two three-bedroom detached dwellings.
Guide price: £325,000
Planning: Amber Valley Borough Council ava/2024/0196
Contact: Savidge & Brown 01773 831111 sales@richardsavidge.co.uk
Plot ID: 136430

STAVELEY
Ralph Road
Land with planning permission for the erection of two dwellings with associated infrastructure, access, parking and gardens.
Guide price: £169,950
Planning: Chesterfield Borough Council 44954
Contact: Wilson & Co 01246 822138 enquiries@wilsonestates.co.uk
Plot ID: 136306

CHESHIRE

AUDLEM
Paddock Lane
A single plot will full planning permission to convert the current commercial dwelling into a three-bedroom property.
Guide price: £250,000
Planning: Cheshire East Council 24/2850N
Contact: Baker, Wynne and Wilson 01270 625214 info@bakerwynneandwilson.com

DEVON
BIDEFORD
Instow
A range of former farm buildings, one of which has consent for conversion into a three-bedroom dwelling.
Guide price: £300,000
Planning: North Devon Council 78620
Contact: Stags 01271 322833 barnstaple@stags.co.uk
Plot ID: 136423

DODDISCOMBSLEIGH, EXETER
Woodland View Barn
Plot of around 0.22 acres with full planning permission for a modern five-bedroom family home of over 325m^2 with rural views.
Guide price: £400,000
Planning: Teignbridge District Council 23/00519/FUL
Planning: Stags 01392 255202 exeter@stags.co.uk
Plot ID: 136261

HOLSWORTHY
Hobbs Garden
Lovely level plot in Holsworthy with full planning for a four-bedroom detached dormer-style property with a large detached garage.
Guide price: £20,000
Planning: Torridge District Council Torridge 1/0593/2024/REM
Planning: Private seller tom1gidley@icloud.com
Plot ID: 136346

LIFTON
Broadwoodwidger
Land with detailed planning permission for a two-bedroom single-storey home and consent for the conversion of an outbuilding into a one-bedroom annexe.
Guide price: £275,000
Planning: Torridge District Council 1/0852/2022/FUL
Contact: Mansbridge & Balment 01837 52371 okehampton@mansbridgebalment.co.uk
Plot ID: 136425

EAST SUSSEX
CROWBOROUGH
Boars Head Filling Station
Single residential building plot with outline planning permission for the erection of a new detached three-bedroom residence.
Guide price: £150,000
Planning: Wealden District Council WD/2023/3099/0
Contact: Michael Brooker Estate Agents 01892 663377 mpb@michaelbrooker.co.uk
Plot ID: 136435

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PLOT?

The perfect piece of land would be in a pleasant area, affordable and level, with easy access, good ground conditions and no planning issues or obstructions. The issue, of course, is that plot may not exist. Even the best sites require some compromise, so it's crucial to properly assess contenders to get as close as possible to your goals.

All the plots in our listings come with planning permission: either outline (a loose affirmation the site can be developed) or full (consent for a particular design). Beware of any site without current approval. Land is worth considerably more once consent has been granted, so if the deal looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Once you've spotted an opportunity, consider whether the type of house you want can be comfortably accommodated on the plot, and if the existing consent allows for it or could be amended to suit. If it's a yes to both, then the site is worth a bit more research.

Check for issues on the plot that could increase construction costs, make it difficult to get the right design for your needs, or affect the viability of a project. Some of the most notorious budget-busters include steep slopes, difficult access to services, or obstacles like overhead cables. Most issues are not insurmountable and, with good design, some can even be turned to your advantage.

From a planning perspective, check how long is left on the consent. If it is less than six months and you will need to redesign the house to suit your needs or sort out any planning conditions, this could be problematic.

If early investigations seem positive, then you can move on to a more in-depth appraisal of how suitable the site is. Consider access, ground conditions, drainage and legal matters. If you are unsure, seek professional advice. This might mean speaking to your local council. Our useful online resource **www.self-build.co.uk/plot-checklist** can help bring structure to this part of the assessment process.

DEVON

BISHOPSTEIGNTON

Teign View Road

A plot of land with full detailed planning permission in place for a detached home and associated off-road parking.

Guide price: £275,000

Planning: Teignbridge District Council 22/01434/ful

Contact: Kitchener Land and Planning 01392 879300 sales@klp.land

HASTINGS

Boyne Road

Plot with full planning permission for a three-storey, three-bedroom, eco-conscious family home with an L-shaped garden with space for a patio and vegetable patch. Plans include parking, a garden shed, a greenhouse and cycle storage.

Guide price: £200,000

Planning: Hastings Borough Council HS/FA/23/00772

Contact: Ashton Stripp 01424 772954 info@ashtonstripp.co.uk

Plot ID: 136264

HOOE

Hooe Barn

One of two serviced plots (The Barn or The Byre) on a small rural site with wonderful views. Both plots are set in an elevated position overlooking farmland and will be fully serviced with utilities to the plot boundary. The Barn has planning consent for a four-bedroom dwelling, and The Brye has planning consent for a three-bedroom single-storey property.

Guide price: £450,000

Planning: Wealden District Council WD/2022/3327/F

Contact: Private seller bethan@hawkingsalexander.co.uk

Plot ID: 136280

SOUTH CHAILEY

Green Lane

Plot of land with planning permission and current designs for an ultra-modern and detached two-storey, four-bedroom family house.

Guide price: £400,000

Planning: Lewes District Council LW/24/0572

Contact: Neville & Neville Estate Agents 01323 833630 contact@nevilleandneville.co.uk

Plot ID: 136382

EAST YORKSHIRE

COTTINGHAM

Harland Way

Plot of 0.27 acres with full planning permission for a pair of three-bedroom dormer-style bungalows.

Guide price: £275,000

Planning: East Riding of Yorkshire Council 21/03512/PLF

Contact: Matthew Limb 01482 669982 info@matthewlimb.co.uk

Plot ID: 136259

EAST COTTINGWITH

Rose Garth - Main Street

Detached property set on a substantial plot of land with planning permission in place for two additional detached homes.

Guide price: £800,000

Planning: East Riding of Yorkshire Council 23/02666/PLF

Contact: Linley & Simpson 01423 540054 sales.harrogate@linleyandsimpson.co.uk

Plot ID: 136422

ESSEX

CANVEY ISLAND

San Remo Road

Plot of land with planning permission for the construction of a three-bedroom property with a garage.

Guide price: £210,000

Planning: Castle Point Borough Council 22/0823/FUL

Contact: Richard Poyntz & Co 01268 699599 rp@richardpoyntz.com

Plot ID: 136420

DEBDEN

Church Lane

A building plot with outline planning for a detached two-storey dwelling of 40.3m^2. The site offers ample off-street parking and amenity space.

Guide price: £160,000

Planning: Uttlesford District Council UTT/23/2164/OP

Contact: Cheffins 01799 523656 saffron-walden@cheffins.co.uk

Plot ID: 136427

HATFIELD PEVEREL

Priory Farm Cottages, Sportsman Lane

A 0.35-acre plot with outline consent for a single-storey detached home.

Guide price: £425,000

Planning: Braintree District Council SAB/24/00196/OUT

Contact: Church & Hawes 01245 225853 danbury@churchandhawes.com

Plot ID: 136271

MERKS HILL, DUNMOW

Merks Hall and Orchard House

Approx 0.46 acres with planning consent for a four-bedroom, Arts and Crafts-style detached house.

Guide price: £425,000

Planning: Uttlesford District Council UTT/23/3157/FUL

Contact: Beresfords - Land and New Homes 01245 447 938 land@beresfords.co.uk

Plot ID: 136266

SUDBURY

Great Henny

Land with planning permission to convert the existing barn and create a three-bedroom single-storey home.

Guide price: £350,000

Planning: Braintree District Council 24/01800/COUPA

Contact: Fenn Wright 01787 327000 sudbury@fennwright.co.uk

Plot ID: 136291

TIPTREE

Station Road

Plot of land of approx 0.05 acres with planning consent for a single detached three-bedroom dwelling.

Guide price: £150,000

Planning: Colchester Borough Council 221083

Contact: Beresfords 01245 500555 chelmsford.sales@beresfordsgroup.co.uk

Plot ID: 136389

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ASTON MAGNA

Paxton Road

Two barns with planning permission. Barn one's permission proposes a detached three-bedroom home of 236.8m^2 and barn two provides a pair of semi-detached units with a combined GIA of 236.1m^2.

Guide price: £1,000,000

Planning: Cotswold District Council 24/01431/AGRPAN, 24/01432/AGRPAN

Contact: Sheldon Bosley Knight 01789 292310 stratford@sheldonbosleyknight.co.uk

Plot ID: 136400

BRISTOL

Church Road

Plot with outline planning permission for a four-bedroom dormer bungalow with open-plan living spaces.

Guide price: £250,000

Planning: South Gloucestershire Council P21/00712/F

Contact: Haart 0117 965 4455 fishponds@haart.co.uk

Plot ID: 136377

CINDERFORD

Parragate Road

A former veterinary clinic with planning consent for conversion into a single-storey dwelling of around 45m^2 with parking and a garden.

Guide price: £125,000

Planning: Forest of Dean District Council P1070/24/FUL

Contact: Toombs & Toombs Property Consultants 01594 844444 office@toombs.properties

Plot ID: 136371

JOYS GREEN

Wye Valley View

Plot of land with planning permission granted for the erection a two-storey, five-bedroom detached home.

Guide price: £175,000

Planning: Forest of Dean District Council P1950/14/FUL

Contact: EweMove Cirencester 01285 702489 cirencester@ewemove.com

Plot ID: 136415

GREATER LONDON

LONDON

Gregory Crescent

Plot of land with planning permission for the construction of a new dwelling with off-street parking and rear garden.

Guide price: £90,000

Planning: Royal Borough of Greenwich 23/2710/F

Contact: McHugh & Co 020 7485 0112 sales@mchughandcompany.co.uk

Plot ID: 136416

NEW MALDEN

West Barnes Lane

Plot with planning permission for the demolition of the existing unit and erection of a two-bedroom three-storey dwelling with a rear yard.

Guide price: £100,000

Planning: London Borough of Merton 22/P2983

Contact: Savills Auctions 020 7824 9091 / 020 7730 0822 auctions@savills.com

Plot ID: 136308

HAMPSHIRE

ANDOVER

Land Adj. 24 The Crescent - Goodworth Clatford

A freehold site with planning permission granted for the

A SLICE OF CORNISH HEAVEN

LOCATION St Keyne, Cornwall

GUIDE PRICE £225,000

AREA One acre

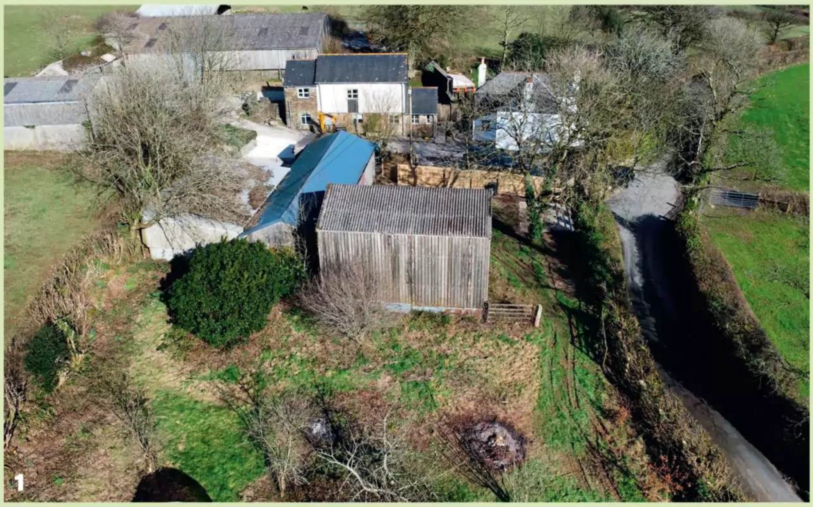
PLANNING Cornwall Council PA23/10129 & PA23/10114

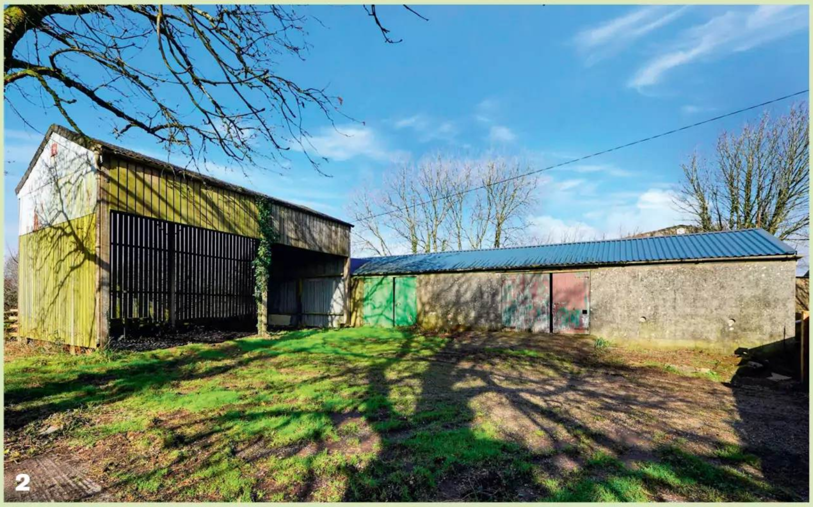
CONTACT Kivells 01579 345543 liskeard@kivells.com

Set in a peaceful spot on the outskirts of the popular village of St Keyne, here is an incredible opportunity to acquire a former dairy with Class Q planning permission for residential development.

The Dairy is a substantial south-facing barn boasting lovely views. Class Q planning consent has been granted for its conversion into a three-bedroom home, with mains electricity and a private water supply already in place. In addition to this, the attached timber frame barn benefits from class R permission to be utilised as a commercial premises, offering the purchaser the rare opportunity to create a bespoke home and business in a semi-rural location. The barns are set within around one acre of land, surrounded by a level garden that has excellent potential to be landscaped or for the creation of an orchard. Set adjacent to the main home, there is a small paddock from which far-reaching views can be enjoyed. Further land is available by separate negotiation.

St Keyne is a small village a few miles from Liskeard. Home to the world-famous St Keyne well, which attracts worldwide visitors, amenities include a church, a local shop, village hall and social club.





1 The former dairy is in a peaceful spot within a small village near Liskeard

2 The land surrounding the barn has great landscaping potential, and could be used as an orchard

3 The two barns are to be converted into a home and business

4 The land amounts to around one acre and boasts stunning far-reaching views over the nearby fields

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NaCSBA
National Custom & Self Build Association

construction of a detached three-bedroom chalet bungalow.

Guide price: £150,000

Planning: Test Valley Borough Council 23/01672/fulln

Contact: Clive Emson Auctioneers 01622 608400 kent@cliveemson.co.uk

Plot ID: 136374

SWAY

Land for sale

A four-bedroom semi-detached house in a cul-de-sac with a large rear garden of circa 0.21 acres. Planning permission granted for a rear extension to the existing house and for a detached bungalow by dividing this generous plot.

Guide price: £515,000

Planning: East Hampshire District Council 23/01569FULL, 23/00812FULL

Contact: Private seller 07834 475817 jonathan.ham33@gmail.com

Plot ID: 136314

HERTFORDSHIRE

CUFFLEY

East Ridgeway

A plot with planning granted for a split-level, four-bedroom detached home with the principal accommodation at the lower level facing onto the garden.

Guide price: £850,000

Planning: Welwyn Hatfield Council 6/2022/2291/pa

Contact: Statons 020 8449 3383 barnet@statons.com

Plot ID: 136295

HAY-ON-WYE

Gypsy Castle Lane

Development site with planning consent for a pair of semi-detached houses and three detached houses.

Guide price: £500,000

Planning: Brecon Beacons National Park 22/21558/rem

Contact: Sunderlands 01432 356161 hereford@sunderlands.co.uk

Plot ID: 136431

KENT

DOVER

Folkestone Road

Plot of land with planning permission granted for the erection of two semi-detached residential dwellings.

Guide price: £72,500

Planning: Dover District Council 23/01044

Contact: Barnard Marcus Auctions 020 8741 9990 / 020 8741 9001 auctions.hammersmith@sequencehome.co.uk

Plot ID: 136433

TEMPLE EWELL

Land South West Of Yamaga - The Avenue

A 0.95-acre plot of land with full planning permission granted for a single dwelling. The site is mainly flat with a sloped drop at certain points and, once landscaped, there will be far-reaching views across the downs from the proposed new dwelling.

Guide price: £395,000

Planning: Dover District Council 23/01097

Contact: Foundation Estate Agents 01227 752617 sales@foundationestateagents.co.uk

Plot ID: 136384

WHYDOWN

St. Margarets Crescent

A 4.5-acre equestrian plot complete with planning permission for a barn, stable block and utilities.

Guide price: £200,000

Planning: Rother District Council RR/2023/762/P

Contact: Ashton Stripp 01424 772954 info@ashtonstripp.co.uk

Plot ID: 136287

LANCASHIRE

BURNLEY

Plot 3 - Reedley Road

A plot with planning permission passed for a five-bedroom detached property with a double garage.

Guide price: £95,000

Planning: Pendle Borough Council 17/0040/ful

Contact: Sharpes Property Auctions 01274 731 217 sales@sharpesauctions.co.uk

Plot ID: 136334

WESTHOUGHTON

Chorley Lane

Building plot with planning for a single three-bedroom detached property.

Guide price: £90,000

Planning: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council 86289/11

Contact: Redman Casey 01204 329990 sales@redmancasey.co.uk

Plot ID: 136317

LEICESTERSHIRE

LEICESTER

Plot 2, Laureston Drive

Plot with outline planning consent approved for the construction of a large four-bedroom executive detached house of around 1,786ft^2.

Guide price: £235,000

Planning: Leicester City Council 20232372

Contact: Private seller 07816 820857 parmdeep@property-system.com

Plot ID: 136386

LINCOLNSHIRE

HOLBEACH

Chancery Lane

Residential redevelopment site with full planning permission granted for the erection of one detached dwelling.

Guide price: £63,000

Planning: South Holland District Council H09-0307-22

Contact: Pygott & Crone 01775 717366 spalding@pygott-crone.com

Plot ID: 136437

NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN

Tower Place

Plot of land with planning consent for two, two-bedroom homes and three, one-bedroom homes. There is also permission to extend the cottage.

Guide price: £150,000

Planning: King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council 18/01163/F, 22/01107/F

Contact: William H Brown 01603 760044 norwich@sequencehome.co.uk

Plot ID: 136399

MUNDFORD

The Lammas

Plot of land with planning permission for the erection of a four-bedroom detached dwelling and garage.

Guide price: £100,000

Planning: Breckland District Council 3PL/2023/0129/F

Contact: William H Brown 01842 811058 brandon@williamhbrown.co.uk

Plot ID: 136410

NORTH YORKSHIRE

BISHOP MONKTON

Moor Road

Edge-of-village plot with outline permission for the construcrtion of a replacement dwelling with garage.

Guide price: £275,000

Planning: Harrogate Borough Council 23/00521/OUT

Contact: Linley & Simpson 01423 540054 sales.harrogate@linleyandsimpson.co.uk

Plot ID: 136357

GOOLE

Main Street

Land with full planning permission granted for a four-bedroom detached house with a double garage .

Guide price: £150,000

Planning: Selby District Council CWX1043-01E, CWX1043-101F

Contact: Your Move 01405 765068 goole@your-move.co.uk

Plot ID: 136258

YORK

Malton Road

A pair of semi-detached houses in addition to a rear yard with detailed planning consent for the creation of two detached dormer bungalows.

Guide price: £700,000

Planning: City of York 22/00406/FUL

Contact: Stephensons Estate Agents 01904 625533 york@stephensons4property.co.uk

Plot ID: 136368

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

SUTTON-IN-ASHFIELD

Beck Lane

Plot of land with outline planning permission for nine dwellings (a mix of detached and semi-detached properties) with all matters reserved.

Guide price: £600,000

Planning: Ashfield District Council V/2023/0054

Contact: Buckley Brown Estate Agents 01623 633633 mansfield@buckleybrown.co.uk

Plot ID: 136355

SHROPSHIRE

PREES HEATH

Golf House Lane

A plot of land with outline planning permission for a single bungalow.

Guide price: £100,000

Planning: Shropshire

GLOUCESTER

DYMOCK

Barn at Leominster Road

Large, detached steel-framed barn with consent for conversion to a five-bedroom detached home with the option to purchase extra land.

Guide price: £475,000

Planning: Forest of Dean District Council P0214/24/FUL

Contact: John Goodwin 01531 634648 ledbury@johngoodwin.co.uk

Council 23/03374/out
Contact: Barbers 01948 667272 whitchurch@barbers-online.co.uk
Plot ID: 136364

SOMERSET

BRUTON
SHUTE LANE
Land with rural views and planning permission for a detached dwelling, garage and formation of access.
Guide price: £395,000
Planning: Somerset Council - South Somerset area 23/01572/ful
Contact: Symonds & Sampson 01258 473766 sturminster@symondsandsampson.co.uk
Plot ID: 136278

ILMINSTER
Love Lane
A single building plot with outline planning permission granted for a single residential dwelling.
Guide price: £175,000
Planning: Somerset Council - South Somerset area 23/03048/out
Contact: Symonds & Sampson 01460 200790 ilminster@symondsandsampson.co.uk
Plot ID: 136418

SALTFORD
Claverton Road
Single level plot with conditional planning permission for a one-bedroom detached dormer bungalow.
Guide price: £200,000
Planning: Bath and North East Somerset Council 24/01826/FUL
Contact: Davies & Way 01225 400400 stephenmorris@daviesandway.com
Plot ID: 136408

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

MILLHOUSE GREEN
Manchester Road
Plot with planning permission for the erection of a single-storey four-bedroom detached property offering approx 111m^2 of accommodation.
Guide price: £275,000
Planning: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council 2022/0508
Contact: Fine & Country 01226 729009 richard.crossfield@fineandcountry.com
Plot ID: 136257

STAFFORDSHIRE

KNUTTON
Church Lane
Building site with detailed planning permission for six executive detached dwellings. Planning approval granted for the construction of four, four-bedroom houses and two three-bedroom homes.
Guide price: £650,000
Planning: Newcastle-Under-Lyme District Council 22/00621/ful
Contact: Mark Buxton 01782 898143 hello@markbuxton.co.uk
Plot ID: 136345

ROOKERY
High Street
Plot of land with planning permission for the conversion of an existing dwelling into a residential property.
Guide price: £65,000
Planning: Newcastle-Under-Lyme District Council 10/00705/FUL
Contact: Shaw's & Company 01782 787840 enquiries@shawsandco.co.uk
Plot ID: 136407

WEST BROMWICH
Tasker Street
A rectangular parcel of land which has outline planning consent for the erection of a three-bedroom detached property.
Guide price: £50,000
Planning: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council DC/23/68939
Contact: Bond Wolfe Auctions 0121 721 8417 auctions@bondwolfe.com
Plot ID: 136340

NORTH YORKSHIRE

EASINGWOLD
Thirsk Road
Opportunity to convert a 297m^2 agricultural barn into a substantial residential dwelling with a one-acre paddock with further land available.
Guide price: £300,000
Planning: North Yorkshire Council ZB23/01242/PIP
Contact: Stephensons Estate Agents 01347 821145 info@stephensons4property.co.uk

NORTHUMBERLAND

CONSETT
Shotley Bridge
Plot with planning permission for a three-bedroom home spread across two storeys, with a central mezzanine level on the first floor.
Guide price: £250,000
Planning: Northumberland County Council 23/01880/ful
Contact: Harrington Brown 01207 258500 mail@harrington-brown.co.uk

SUFFOLK

BRENT ELEIGH
West Barn, Hedgerows Farm
Plot with full planning permission for the erection of a detached, two-storey property with five bedrooms, set in a generous 3.32 acres.
Guide price: £495,000
Planning: Babergh District Council DC/24/02083
Contact: Chapman Stickels 01473 372372 info@chapmanstickels.co.uk
Plot ID: 136273

HALESWORTH
5 Dairy Hill
Plot with existing double garage, off-road parking for two more cars and a lockable large tin shed. Outline planning permission has been granted for the construction of a single two-bedroom bungalow.
Guide price: £125,000
Planning: Waveney District Council DC/24/2148/PREAPP
Contact: Private seller 07933 128522 jillnbarry7@gmail.com
Plot ID: 136320

HITCHAM
Rear of Brick House - Bury Road
Plot of land with planning permission for a four-bedroom single-storey dwelling with cart lodge parking.
Guide price: £290,000
Planning: Babergh District Council DC/22/04781
Contact: Clive Emson Auctioneers 01622 608400 kent@cliveemson.co.uk
Plot ID: 136373

SURREY

HASLEMERE
Scotland Lane
Elevated corner plot with planning permission for a 399m^2 property.
Guide price: £1,000,000
Planning: Waverley Borough Council Wa/2024/00580
Contact: Clarke Gammon Wellers 01428 664800 haslemere.sales@clarkegammon.co.uk
Plot ID: 136289

REDHILL
Woolborough Farm House - Woolborough Lane
Plot of land with planning permission granted for a single-storey dwelling.
Guide price: £225,000
Planning: Tandridge District Council 2022/1280
Contact: Connect UK Auctions 0800 448 0100 emma@connectukgroup.co.uk
Plot ID: 136419

WARWICKSHIRE

BURTON GREEN
Red Lane
A substantial plot of land with consent for a single residential dwelling and double garage. The plot totals 1.09 acres with approx 60% included in the residential planning permission, and the remaining 40% to be maintained as woodland.
Guide price: £500,000
Planning: Warwick District Council W/23/1738
Contact: Sheldon Bosley Knight 07542 301093 nkyriacou@sheldonbosleyknight.co.uk
Plot ID: 136285

OXHILL
Nolands Farm
Plot of land with planning consent granted for the construction of a five-

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***A place is based on one device - for one or two people.**

HIGHLAND

MOY
Acre Cottage
Plot with planning and building warrant granted for the conversion of the three adjoining derelict cottages into a detached house.
Guide price: £152,500
Planning: Highland Council 20/00125/msc, 22/01358/ful
Contact: Tailor Made Moves Ltd 01463 233218 info@tailormademoves.co.uk

bedroom residential dwelling with associated works with conditions.
Guide price: £700,000
Planning: Stratford-on-Avon District Council 24/01174/FUL
Contact: Knight Frank LLP 01789 297735 stratford@knightfrank.com
Plot ID: 136359

MORETON MORRELL
Land for sale
Plot with planning permission granted for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a replacement detached dwelling and associated external works, including repositioning the existing driveway.
Guide price: £1,000,000
Planning: Stratford-on-Avon District Council 23/02737/FUL
Contact: Fine & Country Leamington Spa 01926 455950 leamington@fineandcountry.com
Plot ID: 136325

WEST SUSSEX

ALDINGBOURNE
Hook Lane
Plot of land with planning permission for demolition of the existing property and erection of a two-storey, four-bedroom dwelling with parking.
Guide price: £500,000
Planning: Arun District Council AL/4/22/PL
Contact: Pegasus Properties 01243 940940 barnham@pegasusproperties.co.uk
Plot ID: 136380

LITTLE HAMPTON
Toddington Lane
Plot of land with full planning permission in place for a five-bedroom detached house with generous parking and gardens.
Guide price: £260,000
Planning: Arun District Council LU/176/23/PL
Contact: Cubitt & West 01903 775576 rustington@cubittandwest.co.uk
Plot ID: 136351

WEST YORKSHIRE

DENBY DALE
Wakefield Road
Plot of land with planning permission for the demolition of a former prefabricated building and for the erection of a dwelling. The proposed plans show a three-bedroom, three-storey detached home.
Guide price: £50,000
Planning: Kirklees Council 2021/62/93327/E
Contact: Richard Kendall 01924 266555 mail@richardkendall.co.uk
Plot ID: 136379

KEIGHLEY
Exley Head Methodist Chapel
Substantial traditional stone built former Methodist chapel with large extension and car park. Full planning permission granted for its conversion into three dwellings, each with a private balcony, private undercroft parking and separate visitor parking.
Guide price: £300,000
Planning: Bradford Metropolitan District Council 24/02323/FUL
Contact: David Hill 01756 795621 info@david-hill.co.uk
Plot ID: 136279

ROTHERHAM
Angel Street
Plot of land with planning permission for a detached two-bedroom dwelling with associated parking.
Guide price: £60,000
Planning: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council 2022/0240
Contact: Your Move 01226 240090 Barnsley@your-move.co.uk
Plot ID: 136397

TONG
Calverley Clough Development, New Lane
A residential development opportunity comprising a range of traditional and modern farm buildings with planning permission and prior approval for conversion to create four substantial detached dwellings.
Guide price: £535,000
Planning: Bradford Metropolitan District Council 24/02790/PAR
Contact: David Hill 01756 795621 info@david-hill.co.uk
Plot ID: 136376

WILTSHIRE

ASHTON KEYNES
North End Farm
Plot of land with planning granted for the conversion of barn and byre to residential use and change of use of annexe to separate residential use.
Guide price: £300,000
Planning: Wiltshire Council N/10/01108/S73
Contact: Perry Bishop and Chambers 01285 646770 landand development@perrybishop.co.uk
Plot ID: 136350

FORDINGBRIDGE
East Martin
Redundant agricultural building with separate planning permissions to replace or convert into a three-bedroom barn-style residence.
Guide price: £380,000
Planning: New Forest District Council 23/11191, 22/11012
Contact: Woolley & Wallis 01425 655900 fordingbridge@w-w.co.uk
Plot ID: 136286

MIDDLELEADE
Castleton Road
Building plot with detailed planning permission granted for a large one-bedroom end-terrace house with off-road parking, front and rear garden.
Guide price: £50,000
Planning: Swindon Borough Council S/22/0295
Contact: Primary Homes & Lettings 01793 988978 info@primaryhomesandlettings.co.uk
Plot ID: 136301

WESTBURY
The Tynings
Plot of land with planning permission granted for the erection of a three-bedroom detached chalet.
Guide price: £95,000
Planning: Wiltshire Council 20/01170/FUL
Contact: Martin & Co 01373 866686 westbury@martinco.com
Plot ID: 136434

WORCESTERSHIRE

GRIMLEY
Land for sale
Plot of land with full planning permission for a two- to three-bedroom dormer-style property.
Guide price: £200,000
Planning: Malvern Hills District Council M/24/01289/ful
Contact: Allan Morris 01905 612266 worcester@allan-morris.co.uk
Plot ID: 136411

LOWER BROADHEATH
Peachley Lane
Development site with uninterrupted views of the Worcestershire countryside. Designed with sustainability in mind, the homes are operated on air source heat pumps and zoned underfloor heating, ensuring excellent eco credentials. The proposed homes have generous bedrooms, parking, storage and a high-spec design throughout.
Guide price: £565,000
Planning: Malvern Hills District Council Refer to agent
Contact: Private seller 07828 864596 info@greenlydevelopments.co.uk
Plot ID: 136298

SCOTLAND

ANGUS

GLENISLA
Land At Glenmarkie
Plot of land of approx 32 acres with planning consent granted for the erection of a detached house.
Guide price: £275,000
Planning: Angus Council 23/00532/FULL
Contact: Galbraith 01786 434600 stirling@galbraithgroup.com
Plot ID: 136398

ARGYLL AND BUTE

CAMPBELTOWN
Hillside Road
Plot of land with planning permission for the erection of a single home.
Guide price: £85,000
Planning: Argyll and Bute Council 23/00922/PP
Contact: Stewart Balfour & Sutherland 01586 553737 sales@sbsproperty.co.uk
Plot ID: 136441

CONNEL
Main Street
Plot with permission in principle for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a dwelling.
Guide price: £100,000
Planning: Argyll and Bute Council 24/00460/PPP
Contact: Bell Ingram 01631 566122 oban@bellingram.co.uk
Plot ID: 136405

GARELOCHHEAD
The Boat Station Plot
Plot with detailed planning permission

for the erection of a substantial two-storey, six-bedroom detached contemporary home.
Guide price: £125,000
Planning: Argyll and Bute Council 23/01917/nma
Contact: Clyde Property 01436 670780 helensburgh@clydeproperty.co.uk
Plot ID: 136312

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE

GARTOCHARN
Old Military Road
Plot of land with stunning panoramic views over the village to Loch Lomond. Planning permission has been approved for a three- to four-bedroom house with an open-plan design and a balcony designed to maximize the breathtaking views.
Guide price: £125,000
Planning: Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Refer to agent
Contact: West Homes 01360 551129 hello@westhomes.co.uk
Plot ID: 136365

FIFE

KIRKCALDY
High Street
One-acre plot of land in Kirkcaldy with planning permission and building warrant granted for four houses.
Guide price: £110,000
Planning: Fife Council 16/02043/
Contact: Online Property Auctions Scotland Ltd 0141 266 0125 contact@opascotland.com
Plot ID: 136310

NEWPORT-ON-TAY
Quality Street
Plot of land with consent for a two-storey detached home with four-bedrooms and an integral garage.
Guide price: £30,000
Planning: Fife Council 23/00459/FULL
Contact: Your Move 01382 224333 dundee@your-move.co.uk
Plot ID: 136409

HIGHLAND

INVERNESS
Bridge Street
Residential development site with full planning permission granted for the construction of three townhouses.
Guide price: £65,000
Planning: Highland Council ROS10713
Contact: Future Property Auctions - Glasgow 0345 646 1117 info@futurepropertyauctions.co.uk
Plot ID: 136436

NORTH LANARKSHIRE

CUMBERNAULD
Craigelvan Avenue
Plot with planning permission for a one-and-a-half-storey house with four-bedrooms and an open-plan lounge/dining/family space.
Guide price: £115,000
Planning: North Lanarkshire Council 18/00511/ful
Contact: Slater Hogg & Howison 01236 458468 cumbernauld@slaterhogg.co.uk
Plot ID: 136322

PERTH AND KINROSS

BLAIRGOWRIE
Site At Larghan - Coupar Angus
A development site extending to 1.2 acres with detailed plans for the erection of two houses on the southern boundary of the grounds of Larghan House. Both four-bedroom houses have a separate double garage and share a driveway.
Guide price: £150,000
Planning: Perth and Kinross Council 23/00718/fll
Contact: Savills 0131 247 3700 edinburghresi@savills.com
Plot ID: 1363653

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SOUTH AYRSHIRE

DAILLY
Back Lane
Plot of land with planning permission for the erection of two new residential dwellings and garages.
Guide price: £45,000
Planning: South Ayrshire Council 23/00706/APP
Contact: Stonefield Estate Agents 01292 501777 enquiries@stonefieldayr.com
Plot ID: 136432

SOUTH AYRSHIRE

CARNWATH
The Old Estate Lane
Flat site of around 1.9 acres comprising a range of agricultural buildings and a derelict cottage. It has expired consent for development that will need to be reapplied for.
Guide price: £175,000
Planning: South Lanarkshire Council CL/13/0445
Contact: Davidson & Robertson Rural 0131 449 6212 office@drrural.co.uk
Plot ID: 136358

WALES

CARMARTHENSHIRE

AMMANFORD
Derwydd Road
A building plot with full planning permission for a detached two-storey house and garage.
Guide price: £89,950
Planning: Neath Port Talbot Council E/35803
Contact: Anna Ashton Estate Agents 01269 839392 ammanford@annaashton.wales
Plot ID: 136290

CARMARTHEN
Land for sale
Three-bedroom farmhouse with planning permission for convert to residential use and the erection of an additional outbuilding.
Guide price: £800,000
Planning: Carmarthenshire County Council PL/06541, W/ 38027
Contact: Morgan & Davies 01267 312729 lampeter@morgananddavies.co.uk
Plot ID: 136330

TOWER HILL
Maes Cawnen
Residential building plot with full planning permission granted for a three-bedroom detached bungalow.
Guide price: £75,000
Planning: Carmarthenshire County Council W/38985
Contact: Gerald R Vaughan 01267 220424 sales@geraldvaughan.co.uk
Plot ID: 136440

GLAMORGAN

CWMLLYNFELL
Ochr Y Waun
Plot of land with outline planning permission for a two-storey dwelling.
Guide price: £90,000
Planning: Neath Port Talbot Council P2024/0528
Contact: Clee Tompkinson Francis 01639 844426 ystradgynlais@ctf-uk.com
Plot ID: 136412

PEMBROKESHIRE

PEMBROKE DOCK
Milton Terrace
A corner infill building plot with consent for a two-bedroom single-storey dwelling with views over Pembroke Dock Town Centre.
Guide price: £60,000
Planning: Pembrokeshire County Council 24/0463/pa
Contact: John Francis 01646 685577 pembroke@johnfrancis.co.uk
Plot ID: 136390

PEMBROKE DOCK
Pennar Park
Five building plots each with full planning permission for a detached four- to five-bedroom property.
Guide price: £450,000
Planning: Pembrokeshire County Council 16/0589/PA
Contact: Town & Country Property Auctions 0800 334 5090 info@tcpa.co.uk
Plot ID: 136348

SAUNDERSFOOT
The Ridgeway
Plots with outline planning permission granted for two detached homes.
Guide price: £195,000
Planning: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park NP/22/0476/OUT
Contact: West Wales Properties 01646 680006 pembroke@westwalesproperties.co.uk
Plot ID: 136388

POWYS

PONT ROBERT
Riverside Vista
An elevated plot with consent for a four-bedroom detached house with views over the river Vyrnwy.
Guide price: £125,000
Planning: Powys County Council Refer to agent
Contact: Private seller 07779 378654 sabah1237@hotmail.com
Plot ID: 136297

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In Focus

Eco builds

By focussing on an energy-efficient design, renewable technologies and natural materials, you can reduce your home's overall environmental impact while enhancing its sustainablity credentials

DUG WILDERS
1

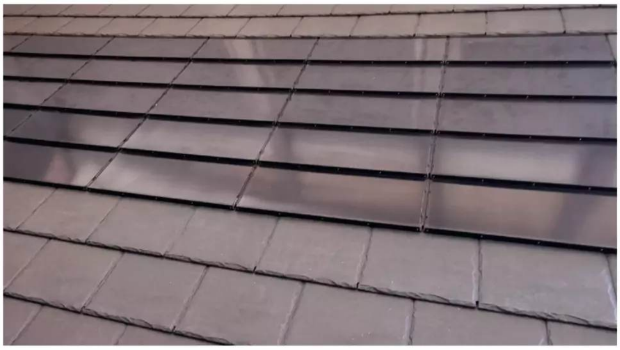
In an era where we're more conscious of environmental challenges, building a property that has been created with sustainability in mind is a priority for many. Eco homes come in many guises; they can be created with natural materials, specify renewable tech or have high thermal efficiency. Building an eco home may seem like a significant investment, but in reality, the long-term benefits outweigh the costs. Energy-efficient systems lower utility bills, while sustainable materials often have greater durability and require less maintenance.

The materials used in a home build are crucial to its sustainability. Prioritising natural, renewable, recycled or locally sourced products reduces the embodied energy needed for manufacture and transport. Reclaimed items such as bricks or tiles minimise waste while adding character; and renewable materials, like FSC-certified timber or bamboo, provide a low-carbon footprint.

Addressing heat loss is a cornerstone of eco home design. High-quality insulation, is a crucial first step, and could be achieved with natural materials, such as sheep's wool. Equally important is airtight construction, which prevents drafts and minimises energy loss by sealing gaps around doors, windows etc. Incorporating passive solar design, pairing large south-facing glazing with thermally massive products, will maximise natural light and heat.

Integrating renewable energy is popular among self builders, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, such as gas or oil. Solar panels, including PV units for electricity and thermal panels for hot water, are common. Heat pumps are another option for well-insulated homes, with ground source heat pumps offering high efficiency but requiring significant investment, while air source heat pumps are more affordable and easier to install in most properties.

1 This Passivhaus was built using natural materials, quality insulation and high-spec glazing from Norrsken (norrsken.co.uk). **2** Designed by Greenheart (greenheartuk.com), this project in Somerset saw a previously-converted cowshed extended in timber frame, with Warmcel recycled cellulose insulation, high-performance windows, a heat pump and MVHR. **3** Backed up by a Tesla Powerwall battery, 16 Jinko 430W solar panels provide around 7,400kWh of electricity per year for this project by JPS Group Renewables (jpsrenewableenergy.co.uk)



The revolutionary roof tile system made using recycled plastic, now also offering solar PV tiles. Lighter loads, easier to fix, better for the planet

The only complete roofing system that offers a lightweight and sustainable alternative to traditional concrete or slate roofing tiles. For 2025, we are excited to announce the launch of a fully integrated, MCS accredited, solar roof tile, EnvirotilePV.

Each EnvirotilePV tile produces up to 25w of power and uses exactly the same interlocking system as other tiles from the Envirotile family. All of our tiles have been independently tested by BRE for wind lift. We have had tiles tested up to 147mph and the tiles stayed put. In fact we are so confident our tiles will never leave your roof as a result of the weather that we offer a lifetime stormproof guarantee. Envirotile is also unbreakable, meaning no unnecessary wastage during transport and installation, or when on your roof.

Envirotile does not crack or crumble. They can be dry cut using a handsaw or power tool and produce no dust or harmful airborne particles, so they are much safer and cleaner to work with. Made using recycled plastic and recycled at end of life, making them a very sustainable roof covering. Fewer tiles required per square metre in comparison with competitors, meaning lower transport and installation cost. Envirotile is also perfect for low pitch applications as they can be used down to a pitch of 12.5°, as confirmed by BRE testing. They can be installed direct to battens or board and being lighter than traditional tiles (8.5kg psm) this makes them very suitable for large span areas.

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At Greenheart we've specialised in sustainable construction using eco-friendly building materials and Passivhaus design principles for 25 years.

As the importance of sustainability in construction becomes increasingly well understood, more and more companies have started adding sustainability to their list of core values.

Meanwhile, at Greenheart we're proud that designing and constructing environmentally friendly buildings has been our focus since day one, giving us a profound industry expertise.

We understand the importance of maintaining close partnerships with technicians and specialists in an industry where new developments are happening every day, and we are always happy to share our knowledge of subjects ranging from insulation and cladding solutions to Heat Recovery Ventilation or how to get the most from renewables.

A turnkey service to ensure visibility and control

We understand that taking the first step on your eco-build journey can feel overwhelming. But with Greenheart guiding you through the process, offering design guidance and the reassurance of cost control, the process will feel much less daunting.

We can work with clients and architects at any stage from concept to completion, on projects ranging from 'deep green' retro-fits and extensions to groundbreaking new homes and commercial buildings. If you're within reach of Bristol and are looking for a local sustainable construction company, your search stops here.

greenheart
Sustainable design and build

Tel: 0117 9429717 **Web:** www.greenheartuk.com

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Hetreed Ross are environmental architects working across the south west – and sometimes further afield - on sustainable projects from new to historic. We work with private clients on homes and workplaces as well as with community and commercial organisations. We work pragmatically to make the best of our client's brief within their budget and timescale to produce beautifully sustainable and economic buildings - for a better life for us all.

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The ZEB is a smart, eco-friendly alternative to a traditional gas boiler, designed to heat your home in the same way as your existing boiler, but more sustainably. Created by tepeo, the ZEB stores electricity as heat within an internal core , which can be released on demand when needed, just like a conventional boiler.

The ZEB charges using electricity from the grid when demand is low or when renewable energy sources, like wind or solar, are higher. This makes it the perfect choice for taking advantage of off-peak electricity rates and green energy, helping you reduce your carbon footprint while potentially saving on your energy bills.

Installation is straightforward, with the ZEB fitting easily into your home by working with your existing radiators or underfloor heating system. It also doesn't require outside space or planning permission, meaning it can typically be installed in 1-2 days.

One of the standout features of the ZEB is its user-friendly App, which allows you to control and monitor your heating from your phone. The App lets you set schedules, track energy usage, and make adjustments remotely, giving you complete flexibility and control over your home's heating.

If you're currently using a direct electric boiler, the ZEB can help you reduce costs by using cheaper electricity while continuing to lower your reliance on expensive fossil fuels. It's a simple, effective, and sustainable solution for the modern home, helping you save money while contributing to the global push towards net-zero.

tepeo's ZEB is a smart investment in your home's future, providing efficient, low-carbon heating for years to come.

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Tel: 020 7072 5462 **Web:** www.tepeo.com

Powering New Builds: Sustainable Savings with JPS Renewable Energy

JPS Renewable Energy, part of the Good Energy Solar group, specialises in solar panel and battery storage systems tailored to customers' needs. Installing solar on new builds boosts EPC ratings, reduces energy bills, and enhances property sustainability. Integrated panels are the preferred solution, offering a sleek look while cutting roof tile costs. This cost-saving system makes your roof an investment, with energy savings helping it pay for itself over time. JPS is proud to be the Which? Approved Trusted Trader of the Month for December 2024, reflecting our commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Whether it's meeting regulatory standards or achieving aesthetic appeal, JPS Renewable Energy ensures every install is designed to maximize efficiency and value for homeowners. Trust us to power your home sustainably.

Tel: 0300 303 3136 **Web:** www.jpsgroup.uk

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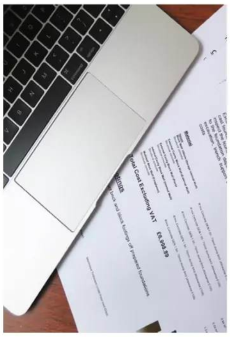

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If you're thinking about extending your home, knowing a realistic cost before you meet with builders can be vital. Not only will it help you to negotiate the cost of the job but it will also help you better understand your options of finishes and fittings and how this will impact the overall price. This tailored costing service includes a schedule planner and cashflow forecast for your extension – essential if you're looking to get a loan for your project.

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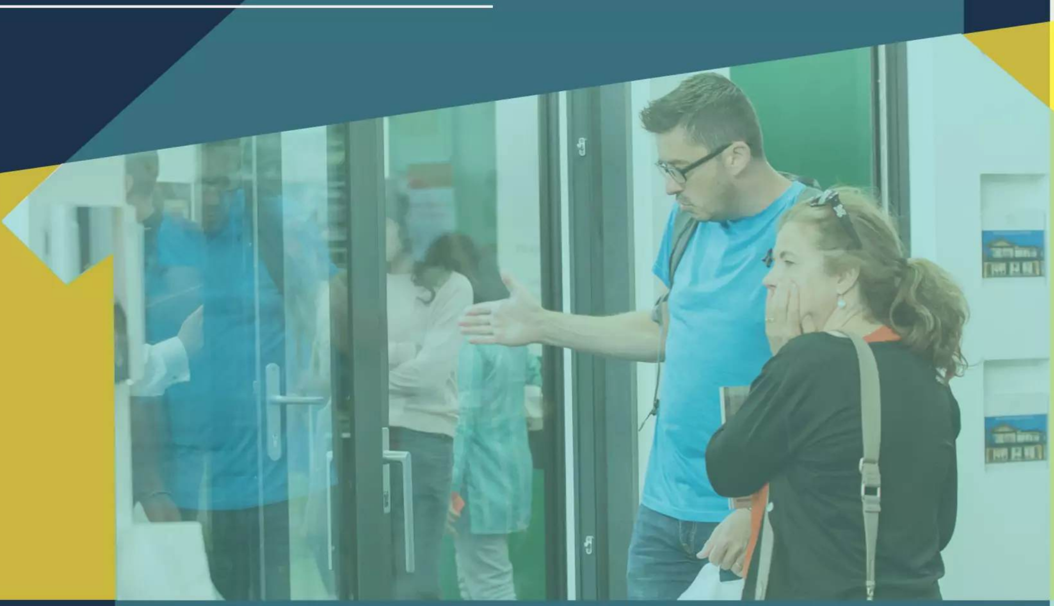

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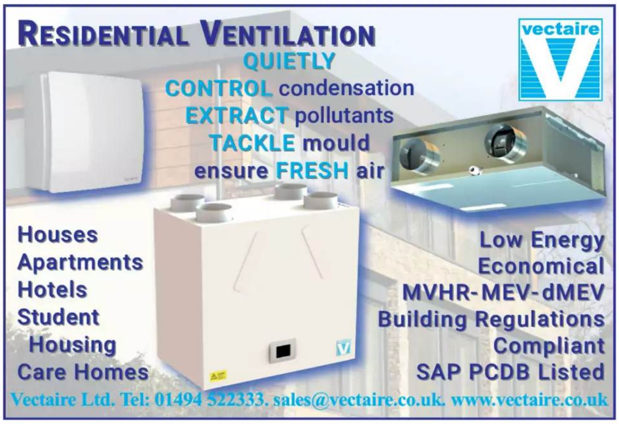

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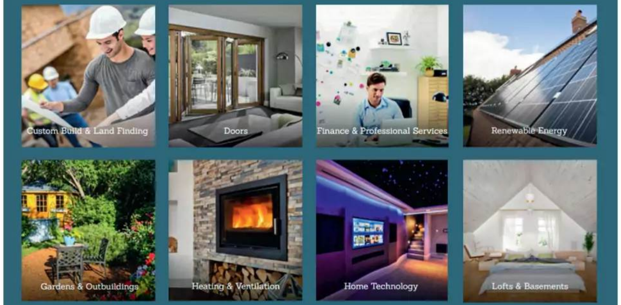

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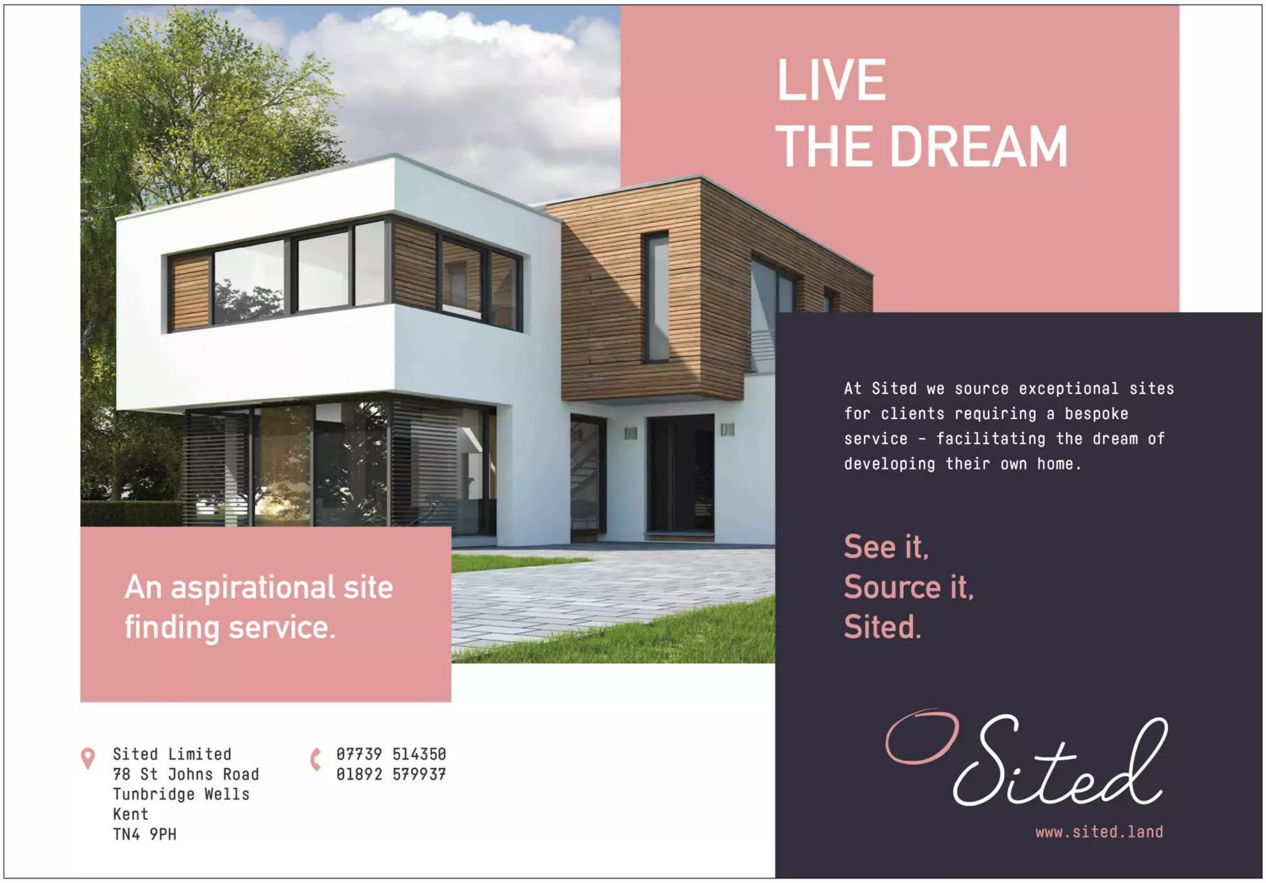

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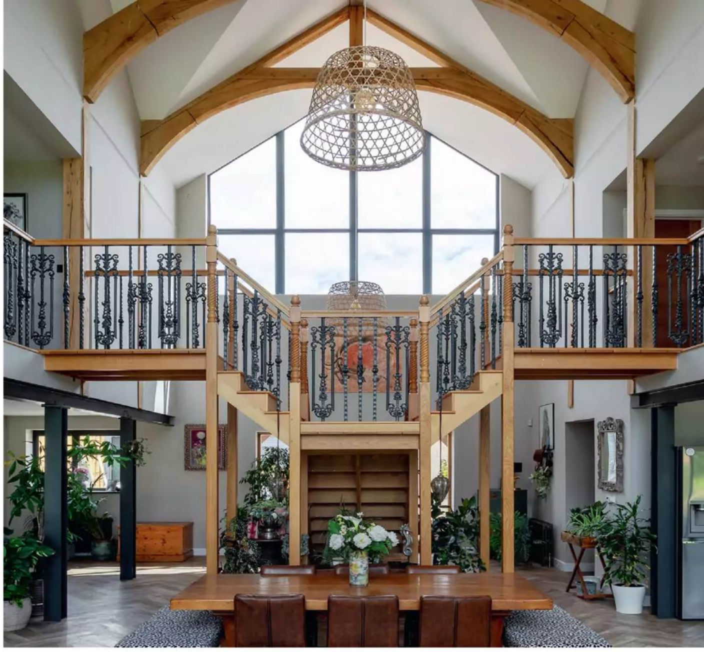

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KATHERINE MALONDA. PAUL CARTER, KINGSPAN OPTIM-R

ARCHITECT'SVIEW

James Cattle, associate director of Snell David Architects, discusses how to create stunning outdoor spaces that complement your new home

How to enhance your build with landscaping

For new builds, extensions and renovation schemes, at what stage of the project should you start planning and designing your landscaping?

All too often, landscaping is a bit of an afterthought. Many self builders will get really excited about the works to their house, so it's not usually until they are on site, and they see the building being realised, that they then turn their attention to the garden. It really shouldn't be left this late. I would encourage people to think about landscaping from the outset of their build journey. This can be just a light touch, and possibly engaging with a landscape designer, or having an understanding of how you want to use the space.

One of the most important things I have learnt is that an architect is not an expert in landscaping. They will do a good job integrating the patio and general planting into the design, but you really can't underestimate the value of a reputable and experienced specialist. A landscape designer will look into the soil type, orientation and sunlight exposure, as well as the specificities of the client's brief.

It is a good idea to ensure your architect collaborates with your garden designer, to allow for both the hard and soft landscaping to evolve alongside your project. The most successful outcomes arise when these different elements are planned together. For instance, to ensure your window placement highlights a compelling vista or frames a particularly striking tree, you have to think about the architecture and the nature surrounding it.

To what extent does the design of your garden have to match the style of the house?

Most clients will want a modern extension, renovation or new build that has a contemporary architectural style. Smooth finishes, clean lines and lots of glazing are commonplace, so you may instinctually believe that the garden needs to conform to this style. Personally, I have found that this doesn't work as well as designing a contrasting outdoor space, which immediately juxtaposes with the building. Using rugged natural materials and a wilder planting scheme really enhances the individual characteristics of each space.

Also, when it comes to maintenance, go with nature rather than fighting against it. You might think that formal modern landscaping, with ordered planting and neutral materials, is low maintenance. I've found the opposite to be true: trying to keep a porcelain tile free from algae and dirt, or a plant bed neatly contained and free from leaves, is a difficult task. Finishes that are enhanced by the weather combined with a free-flowing, natural garden will enrich your surroundings and save you time and money on upkeep.

MATTHEW SMITH ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRA

Set in Hertfordshire, Snell David Architects designed this renovation, extension and new garden terrace. The hard landscaping responds to the sloping topology, merging the new addition with the environment

In your view, what are the main factors that are likely to impact landscaping costs?

Often the landscaping work will not be carried out at the same time as construction. This might be due to the spatial limitations on site, or because the builder doesn't have the expertise required. Landscape designers will want a specialist landscape contractor to conduct the works, as they are experienced in moving plants, laying paving and decking and planting trees appropriately. These are all very important, nuanced skills that, especially for larger schemes, need someone who can dedicate their entire focus towards them.

Groundworks and hard landscaping are time-consuming jobs. If you leave these decisions to the latter stages of your project, they will often be too expensive to be executed properly, meaning that compromises will have to be made. This is why it's so important to think about the outdoor space at the start of your design journey.

Drainage is an overlooked component of garden design and can be costly if not properly investigated. Poor water drainage can decrease the quality of your lawn and digging trenches to remedy this is an expensive and substantial task to complete. It's imperative to understand the make-up of your ground before design work starts to help determine both suitable foundations for the build and the appropriate landscaping options available for your garden.

For material costs, the power is in your hands. You can tailor patios, fencing, planters, pathways and decking to suit your budget as there are plenty of great options in varied price brackets.

Can materials from the build be recycled and repurposed for a more sustainable landscaping scheme?

Spoil (excavated soil) from the groundworks phase can cost a fortune to remove from site. If it's in good condition and has been thoroughly checked for contamination, this can be used to create bunds (embankments) in the garden to generate an interesting topography, for example. Just make sure to top this off with a decent imported topsoil so that it will be habitable for plants.

After the demolition works, crush the broken out concrete slabs or old blockwork walls on site rather than sending them to landfill. These can then be used as a good hardcore base for any hard-standing or paving areas. Similarly, some houses might have old quarry tiles or brick pamments that, depending on their frost resistance, can be used to create a unique patchwork paving.

It is important to have fun with your landscaping. Quirky ideas like using old butler sinks as planters, or timber windows as interesting follies, are great for adding unexpected features to your garden.

James Cattle is associate director of Snell David Architects with over 10 years' experience working in the domestic residential sector in London and Cambridgeshire. The practice focuses on a personal, design-led approach to create stunning bespoke homes that enhance the local landscape. For more information call **020 8870 3335** or visit the website at **www.snell-david.co.uk**

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